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THE RELIGIOUS POEMS OF RICHARD CRASHAW

R. A. ERIC
SHEPERD

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**THE RELIGIOUS POEMS
OF
RICHARD CRASHAW**

ROEHAMPTON :
PRINTED BY JOHN GRIFFIN.

THE RELIGIOUS POEMS

OF

RICHARD CRASHAW
=

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY

BY

R. A. ERIC SHEPHERD

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INTRODUCTION.

I. BIOGRAPHICAL.

"POET and Saint" is how Cowley, Crashaw's elegist, salutes the dead poet; and in this case there is more truth in the words than in many similar compliments. That Crashaw was a poet is too obvious to need comment: that he was a saint is true in the broader sense that Crashaw's was a most holy, humble and genuine soul. Born in 1613 and dying in 1649, the poet lived but thirty-six years, most of which were spent in quiet and reflective retirement as a Fellow at Cambridge. Into the last six years of his life is crowded really all the incident that it contains; and during these years were written, following upon the great crisis of the poet's life, almost all the poems with which in this book we are concerned. ✓

Richard Crashaw was born in London, where his father, William Crashaw, was a Puritan preacher of some note. About the poet's father not much is known beyond that he cherished a quite special grudge against the Pope, and inveighed against his son's future "chief shepherd" to the extent of some dozen volumes. He seems, however, to have been a man of some education, for we hear of him addressing some Latin verses to his son's tutor, while the poet was at school. What is most important to know about him, we do know, namely that he was a good father; and had his son's present welfare at heart no less than the Pope's future.

About the poet's mother, not even the efforts of the most indomitable editors have availed to discover anything beyond that she died in her son's infancy, and was replaced by William Crashaw a few years later. His second wife appears, however, by no means ✓

to have followed in the fairy-tale tradition, but to have been a kind stepmother to her husband's child.

Richard Crashaw was sent to school at Charterhouse, but of his progress at that institution nothing is known. In 1631, being by this time eighteen years of age, the poet was entered at Pembroke College, Cambridge; but did not matriculate until some little time later, owing to a dearth of scholarships or some such cause. The poet, in the time-honoured manner of poets, was not well-off; and his father, by this time dead, had not apparently been able to leave him provided for. At Pembroke College, then, Crashaw passed his undergraduate days. Of them little is known, but we may infer that he was deeply studious.

It may be as well to mention at this point that the Cambridge of Crashaw's day was largely under the influence of Laud's reaction, which was at that time what the modern "Catholic" movement in the Church of England is to-day. The Reformation had by this time fulfilled itself in the Puritans. The strong national impulse lent to English Protestantism by the threat of invasion from without had subsided with the removal of that danger. Thus, those Englishmen, who, while caring for religion, yet lacked the fiery dogmatism of the Puritan, had leisure to look around them and wonder where they stood. To meet this need came Laud with his doctrine of a semi-divine king to replace the authority of the Pope, and his attempt to restore to the English Church some part at least of Catholic practice. Laud's attempt, in fact, was the first of a long series of efforts on the part of English Churchmen to give basis and theory to that compromise hastily jobbed together at the accession of Queen Elizabeth. For expediency cannot justify for ever: and at the Universities at least some "theory" was welcome.

Whether Puritanism can ever have had any influence on Crashaw, it is not possible to say. It is most

probable that it never had. And it is certain that at Cambridge he speedily became imbued with the notions prevalent there. A thousand reasons for this are at once apparent. The influence of his tutor, John Tournay, a man whom Crashaw admired, and a clergyman in decided reaction against Puritan theology, the religious tone of the College and University generally, and a host of contributory reasons, all acted upon him to the expulsion of whatever Puritan bias he may have had. The real reason, however, is simply Crashaw's own temperament, the nature of his own mind.

We have all heard of "temperamental" converts to Rome—we hear them mentioned with gentle rebuke in non-Catholic circles—people on whom the incense used in Catholic ritual is supposed to have worked to the stifling of their intellect and the drugging of their conscience. This is one explanation, at least—and the phenomenon certainly does exist. There are undoubtedly people who, whatever their religious upbringing, have only got to catch a stray glimpse of Catholicism at once to embrace it. The mental process is not of time but of eternity. It may be likened to love at first sight. Such a soul, moreover, was Crashaw's; and in this fact lies the whole and entire reason of his immediate defection at Cambridge from the theology which presumably he was brought up to hold. There are cathedrals in Holland whose interior the Puritans are said to have whitewashed so as to conceal the frescos with which the walls are decorated, but with the lapse of time the whitewash has grown thin and now and then the warm hues of the fresco have glimmered through. This is what had happened at Cambridge. The Puritan whitewash had grown thin, and Crashaw's eye was able to perceive the glimmering of some brighter thing underneath, though he could not yet know fully that it was so.

Crashaw was one of those people whom we should call "naturally good." The "*Thou shalt not*" of religion did not therefore greatly concern him, for he

lived above the mere letter of the law. It was the ✓ "*If thou wouldst then be perfect*" that awakened his soul; and to this rarer piety Protestantism has ever had too little to say. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is generally admitted to be unique for her dealing with saints and the higher yearnings of piety; and this she is enabled to do because she is "Catholic" and has made provision for every variety of soul with whose salvation she may be charged.

As it is with Crashaw's religious poems that this book is dealing, so it is with his religious development that I shall chiefly concern myself in this account of his life. For this reason I have adverted to the religious atmosphere of Crashaw's Cambridge; and for this reason I have attempted to describe his own religious temperament as I conceive it to have been. What was wanting, one would imagine, to a great many men of Crashaw's date was some opportunity of knowing at first hand the Catholic Church. There was assuredly at that time, as there is to-day, a tendency towards Catholicism in many quarters. There was no apathy towards religion on the part of thinking men. On the contrary it was pre-eminently the first consideration of their minds. What was needed was opportunity; and to Crashaw at least, as we are shortly to see, opportunity was given, nor was he slow in profiting by it.

In 1636 Crashaw became a Fellow of Peterhouse, and settled down to the life of a senior member of the older Universities. He was a fine scholar; and his linguistic ability would appear to have been prodigious, for in addition to the classical languages he is said to have read fluently French, Italian, and Spanish—the last two of which had, in different ways, great influence upon him—the former on his literary style, the latter on his soul. During his Cambridge years he was naturally producing poetry, and his earlier works, both sacred and secular, belong to this period of his life, and were afterwards collected and

published under the titles *Delights of the Muses* and *Epigrammata Sacra*. He had, too, many congenial friends (as who has not at the University?) notably John Beaumont (also a Fellow at Peterhouse) and later on the poet Cowley who came up in all the freshness and sparkle of his somewhat shallow and unlovable genius from Westminster to Trinity while Crashaw was in his early years as a don at Peterhouse. For seven quiet years Crashaw was a Fellow of Peterhouse, filling his time with congenial occupation, the exercise of his talents, and the society of his friends. We hear of him as delighting in the decoration of a new church, as warmly interested in the attempt of a friend to revive the religious life in the Anglican Communion (for all the world like to-day) at the village of Little Gidding. Most likely Crashaw looked forward to ending his life at Cambridge; and probably he would have done so, had not circumstances, beneath whose roughness and rigour lay concealed in Crashaw's case the grace of God, routed him out from those quiet groves, and thrown him upon the world, there to experience the poet's proverbial lot of hardship and obscurity, but there also to make (which he might never have done had he remained secure at Cambridge) the great discovery of his life, the discovery that the Catholic Faith is not only lovely and desirable, but also true.

But during the seven years of Crashaw's residence at Cambridge as a senior member of that University, a crisis in the history of England was slowly but surely maturing; and watchers of the political skies must have begun to feel a little uneasy about the future, especially if they conducted their observations from any snug position on earth. The two elements in English society at that date were daily drifting further and further apart. The Puritans, who were composed chiefly of the yeoman or what we should call middle-class element, could not be brought to stomach the king's spiritual elevation, particularly when they

found both the king himself and his ministers prepared to make an anything but spiritual use of this new and highly convenient doctrine—which was of course to be expected. Having got rid of the Pope, the pugnacity of the Puritans turned itself upon these new aspirants—and not without justification. It cannot be claimed that either the King or his advisers made a wise use of the new powers they sought to arrogate to themselves. One is tempted to suppose that they cannot have been aware that it was a crater upon which they had elected to picnic, though there was plenty of smoke and a pungent odour of sulphur rising to warn them. However, *quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat!*—and it was not very long before the volcano erupted, as volcanoes will, blowing off the heads of Laud and Strafford, nor even respecting that anointed one of his semi-divine majesty King Charles I.

In 1643 the Parliamentary authorities swooped down on Cambridge and administered the Covenant, like a nauseous black draught, to the reluctant members of that University. The chapels and other evidences of Laud's influence we may well imagine their zeal made short work of. Most of the Fellows and masters swallowed the dose perforce (their wind-pipes were roughly clutched if they did not—figuratively that is, for ejection was the only alternative) but some few were resolute in declining it, and fled from Cambridge to seek either retirement abroad or the King's standard at Oxford. Amongst the latter were numbered Cowley and Crashaw. They gave up their positions and joined the King where he mustered his legions in St. Giles' (perhaps) and held his court in Christ Church Hall.

At this point for the ensuing three years—from 1643 to 1646—Crashaw disappears. How long he stayed at Oxford is unknown—probably not long, for there was at Oxford in that time little enough provision, one would imagine, even in a material sense, for

any besides soldiers. Crashaw, moreover, the mild don and studious poet, can hardly have made a very competent man-at-arms. Be this as it may, he disappears and nothing certain is known about him till the year 1646, when he was discovered by Cowley in Paris in a state of great penury. How long he had been in Paris is unknown; nor is it recorded how he employed his time in this interval. My own theory (and I give it for what it is worth) is that one thing he did during this time, probably in Paris, was to become acquainted with, and thoroughly to devour, the writings of the Counter-Reformation School of Spanish Mystics.

His poems seem to bear witness that he had known previously of St. Teresa; and it is probable that he had read some part at least of these mystical writings while still at Cambridge. I think it likely, however, that he came to them really at this time in his life; and their influence upon him was certainly enormous. There is commonly some one agency (trivial often in itself) in a conversion which precipitates matters, and quickens the slow consideration of many years into swift resolution. In Crashaw's conversion I am inclined to assign the Spanish mystical writings as the determining factor.

However, in the year 1646, Cowley, who appears to have combined with his poetic genius a happy knack of looking after himself, arrived in Paris as Secretary to my Lord Jermyn, then told off to attend the Catholic Queen of Charles I., Henrietta Maria, in her retirement at Paris. Here the fortunate poet discovered the unfortunate one; and, while feeling a slight pitying contempt for this shiftless brother, befriended him, and gained him an audience with the Queen. Be it noted particularly, that Crashaw, at the time of his discovery by Cowley in Paris, was already a Catholic. From the obscurity of his unrecorded years this great fact emerges—Crashaw had at length found his destination, and was placed just where his poetical genius might flourish.

As might have been expected, Crashaw was a success at the exiled court of Henrietta Maria. His own pleasing personality, combined with his religion and extraordinary genius, won the Queen to be his friend in a very short time. But, alas, the poor lady had in her gift but few favours to bestow. She was an exile. Her lord, fighting for his existence in the land over which he should have reigned, could afford her little indeed for largesse to poets, however sublime their genius. Thus the Queen could give to the poet little but her favour and the hospitality of her Court; and, though later she furnished him with the introduction and probably the purse which took him to Rome, that was the utmost she could do for him. In the meantime, however, Crashaw lived at Paris, frequenting the Court and writing most of the poems which are to be included in this volume.

There is little more to say of the poet. His short life was soon to close. After some time spent in Paris, he started for Rome, where his introduction from the Queen secured him the position of Secretary to a certain Cardinal Palotta, in whose service he remained almost until his death. It is said that the Cardinal himself sent him away, though sincerely attached to him, because Crashaw's bold and outspoken criticism of what went on amongst the servants and hangers-on of the Cardinal's court brought down upon him the deadly hate of those unscrupulous persons. Whether this be so one cannot say, but in 1649 Crashaw received a benefice at Loretto owing to the Cardinal's recommendation, and there, after holding the office for but three months, he fell sick and died. His gentle and lovable nature, his harmless beneficent life, and his intense mounting flame of faith, are well summed up in the motto which he himself prefixes to his volume of poems, *Steps to the Temple*:

“ Live, Jesus, live, and let it be
My life to die for love of Thee.”

Thus lived and died Richard Crashaw, one of the gentlest and most sublime of Catholic poets.

II. PANEGYRICAL.

What is Religious Poetry? The question is a harder one to tackle than appears at first sight. Ninety-nine people out of a hundred would reply at once that religious poetry is poetry written in a religious spirit about religious subjects. On this definition Crashaw's is undoubtedly religious poetry.

Francis Thompson, however, in his oddly grumbling essay on Crashaw, demurs. To him Crashaw's is not religious poetry, or rather as he himself says, "It is not what people are accustomed to understand by religious verse." Thompson further maintains that Crashaw's is "essentially a secular genius"—he is allured to religious themes "not by the religious lessons, but the poetical grandeur and beauty of the subject"—"he sings the stable at Bethlehem, but he does not sing its lessons of humility, poverty, self-abnegation." In other words, and stated as concisely as possible, Thompson is disappointed with Crashaw because Crashaw seems wholly wrapt up and enthralled with the idea of the actual occurrence of the thing, seems entirely content with the very *picture* of the event as it was, and in no wise concerns himself with the application of the lesson that it contains. Crashaw says, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus!" But he does not say, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." In other words, he *sings* hymns, but does not preach; hails, but does not expound. Therefore, says Thompson, he is not a religious poet.

For my part I am not concerned at this time to enter into a long discussion as to what religious poetry in its essence may be. I am simply concerned with

Crashaw as a religious poet. It is probable that Thompson is right, and that Crashaw's poetry is "not what people are accustomed to understand" by religious poetry, just as a hymn is not what people are accustomed to understand by a homily. Nevertheless a hymn may be as inspiring as any homily. But there is one little simple biographical detail about Crashaw that entirely explains the hymning quality in his poetry, that settles once and for all why Crashaw is not what "people are accustomed to understand, etc." This little fact, so simple yet overlooked by Thompson, is the key to any sympathetic understanding of Crashaw's poetry, and it is the corner-stone to this appreciation. It is simply this, *Crashaw was a convert*.

The psychology of the intense convert is a study so interesting that one might dilate on it for hours on end. We must all have met converts, so intensely and wholly taken up with the glory and magnitude of their discovery that their conversation grows wearisome in its insistence on one theme. It is not the lessons that the Church teaches that they commonly speak of: it is the Church herself, the fair view of her walls as one approaches her, the mere spectacle of her from all her manifold sides, the very joy of being part of her, one with her—these are the things that they repeat again and again, and must repeat for the very relief of doing so. Their joy is uncontrollable. They have just learnt: they have just broken out into the streets with the glad cry, "Eureka" on their lips. The Catholic Faith is true! We know it! How do you know it? We do not know how we know it! The Faith is a gift to us: we awoke in the morning and it greeted us! Eureka! Eureka! How can you expect a sermon of such people or of anyone mad with joy? What does the lover say of his sweetheart? Does he write of her solemnly, speaking pompously of love and its ennobling influence on the heart of man, of its mystery and strange

delight? No, if he does so he is not very much in love. What he does is to dance and leap about, as Saint Francis did (that perpetual convert) when he thought of God. He is for the time an ecstatic; and the ecstatic does not preach, he sings.

This, then, is what Thompson complains of in Crashaw, the ecstasy of the convert. Crashaw wearies Thompson by his breathless dwelling on the facts of redemption, the means whereby it was accomplished. Thompson comes to hear Crashaw preach on the Nativity, but Crashaw leads him to the crèche and kneels before it. Thompson desires to hear a sermon on the Atonement, but Crashaw turns and contemplates the Crucifix! Thompson seeks to be instructed, but Crashaw cannot teach—he can only sing hymns. So Crashaw is not “what people are accustomed to understand”: but neither was Saint Francis. There stood by those that said the anointing of our Lord's feet with the precious ointment was a wicked waste of good ointment, but our Lord reprovéd them and said that a good work was wrought upon Him, and that she who was thus prodigal should anoint His Body against the burial. That is just what Crashaw did—he broke his jar of precious ointment prodigally upon the feet of Jesus, anointing His Body against the burial. Mary Magdalene who did this thing was also in her sense a convert.

Let us illustrate this from the titles of Crashaw's poems. Listen, this is how he names them. *To the Name above every Name, the Name of Jesus! The Holy Nativity of our Lord God! The Glorious Epiphany! Vexilla Regis: the Hymn of the Holy Cross! Sancta Maria Dolorum: a pathetic descant upon the devout plainsong of Stabat Mater Dolorosa (a quintessentially convert touch)! Upon the bleeding Crucifix! Upon the Body of our Blessed Lord, Naked and Bloody! Upon the Crown of Thorns taken down from the Head of our Blessed Lord, all Bloody! Dies iræ: dies*

illa!—and a host of similar ones, all precisely the subjects which a convert would be likely to choose should he be a poet, to praise in hymns. Be it noted also that all the poems are hymns. If these be not precisely what people are accustomed to understand by religious poetry, it must be because people are not accustomed to understand converts; it must be because people are accustomed to homilies but not to ecstasies; it must be in short because people are dull and will not accustom themselves to understand anything at all.

The truth is that the element in Crashaw that alienates people's sympathy is just simply his ecstasy. We English are not ecstatic: we suspect ecstasy of being the pother of shallow waters. Our religion is apt to be always vested in violet. Gold dazzles, and white distracts us. When a gift horse is presented to us, we instinctively look it in the mouth, and distrust the motives of the donor. Hence it is little to be wondered at that Crashaw has never been popular with his own countrymen. He is too little like us. We would not commit ourselves to a hymn of Crashaw's sort. They afflict us with an uneasy sense of indelicacy. When we hear of Archimedes rushing into the streets crying, "Eureka," we do not so much rejoice in his find as blush for his nakedness. So it is with Crashaw. We feel the man has given himself away: hence it is impossible wholly to approve of him. Let him find never so much, he should have waited to put on his clothes and then written his discovery to the paper—and in Crashaw's case the more especially because it was a religious discovery!

Indeed the Englishman, on looking through Crashaw with gingerly fingers, is relieved to find that there is ample reason for his disapproval. Imagine him coming upon these much guffawed-at lines about the Magdalene's tears:

"Two walking baths, two weeping motions,
Portable and compendious oceans."

He reels! Here is something so palpably bad that he can laugh at its author with a contented mind so long as he lives. "Two walking baths!"—he shouts with laughter. This indeed is not what he is accustomed to understand by religious poetry—no, nor by poetry either! And this is the man they call a great poet! Why, I would not have written such lines myself! Nor would he, you may be sure.

It would of course be ridiculous to attempt to defend the sense of these lines. They are truly very laughable, but the laugh they elicit is one almost of admiration for the author of them. Only a great poet could have written such bad lines. And they are strikingly illustrative of my contention about Crashaw. In ecstasy, as S. Francis shows, the sublime and the ridiculous are perilously near neighbours—perilously, that is, to us who observe, not by any means to the ecstatic. He rather welcomes the ridiculous. He is not so self-conscious as we are, and is not so sensitive about what Fr. Garrold calls his "blessed dignity." It is probable that Crashaw liked those lines and would not have changed them if you had laughed at him. Perhaps the queen and her ladies *did* laugh at him. "'Walking baths,' Mr. Crashaw? Lawks, what a notion, I protest!" But perhaps Mr. Crashaw smiled and let his baths continue to walk. But what nonsense, you say! The lines are absurd and indefensible. And so they are—as poetry they are indefensible, and possibly it is a discreditable quibble to defend them because they are also ecstatic. But they *are* ecstatic; and if you read the poem as Crashaw wrote it you would not stick over its absurdity much.

What an extraordinary speed there is in Crashaw's stanzas. How involved they look as your eye skims the page before it begins to read, and yet how swiftly and musically they flow. How he plays with thoughts and images, juggling with them half-tentatively, dwelling on some one half-tenderly, half-humorously, discard-

ing an old for a new one with almost a child's delight! How intensely the beauty of holiness dwells in his poems! There is warmth, melody, and sweetness somewhere in them, for all the grumbling critic pronounces them hard. I do not think Crashaw was allured solely by the poetic grandeur and beauty of the themes. Certainly I think he delighted in that, as a poet has a right to do. I think few poets since S. Francis have come to the themes with so much wondering ecstasy as Crashaw, so much sheer irresponsible joy in the very sound of them. Look again at his titles. They are all full of his spirit, the spirit of the poet who is also a convert to the Catholic Faith; a spirit that rejoices in the poetic grandeur of his themes, certainly, as what poet would not, but is deeply and passionately and tenderly full at the same time of love and faith.

To me, indeed, in all humility, Thompson seems in this matter wholly wrong. I cannot imagine anyone reading Crashaw and gaining nothing of religion from him. The objection seems protestant in Thompson. Is preaching, then, the only way in which God is to be declared? Is not sheer praise, is not light, is not music, is not sweet odour, is not even dancing (as the boys do before the Blessed Sacrament on Corpus Christi Day in Seville), are not all these things parts of worship? Is it no lesson, no high inspiration, to see a man beside himself, carried beyond himself, by the radiant beauty of objective truth? We are told that the very presence of a saint in the same place with us is an inspiration. And why? Simply because in a saint we actually see, or feel, religion *in action*. We do more than understand it with our minds: we actually see it happening with our eyes! and this is of more value than many sermons. It is a miracle, an epiphany, a transfiguration, the spirit of God descending like a dove. It is not what we are accustomed to understand, truly. But may we not be thankful that now and then things do happen which

we are not accustomed to understand, but which surprise us, bother us, tantalise us, o'er-crow us (as Shakespeare has it), shake us out of our smug omniscience and show us in action those things to which we are exhorted in every sermon that we hear. "Love, thou art absolute sole lord of life and death," sings Crashaw in his most splendid hymn. "True," says Thompson. "Show me now how!" But Crashaw never voyaged far in this world on the other side of that supreme discovery, for God took away his life.

Let us now, for the very sport of the thing, deal with a few of the more frivolous objectors to our poet. Crashaw is hyperbolic, says the weary man with the faint surfeited smile, he is forever soaring up into the sky shrieking like a rocket and exploding into a thousand coloured stars. He overdoes the ecstatic: one cannot keep up with him! The weary man is quite right. If there is a difficulty about Crashaw, it is to keep pace with him. But the weary man implies that the fault is Crashaw's, not his own. He means that Crashaw should have thought of all the weary men who were destined to get out of breath over his poems, and have pitched them a key or two lower—which is absurd. Most poets are for a mood, and Crashaw is for our moments of religious ecstasy. As for hyperbole, what is it, this terrifying word? It means, I suppose, to use language and figures out of proportion to the theme, or to exaggerate language and figures to an impossible degree. But there is no language, there are no figures, out of proportion to Crashaw's theme: and as for exaggeration, does not all love or ecstasy do this? Were the Elizabethans to be taken literally when they sang their mistresses in all the colours of the rainbow? The pitfall of hyperbole is bathos, and grievously hath Crashaw tumbled into it, to be sure. But does anybody mind a stumble or two who is leaping up steep paths with the rarefied air of snow in his nostrils and the dazzling white peaks everywhere around him? I trow

not; and I'm sure that Crashaw did not. What seems bathos in great poets is often only the failure of our mood to correspond to the exalted invitation of the poet. I say often: I do not mean always. I think myself that there is bathos in Crashaw's poetry, but not in Crashaw. He, I am sure, was conscious of none. In the high airs which he breathed when he was writing one may often fall and never know that one has fallen until the bruise is pointed out to one at night. But to be in such atmospheres is worth a bruise or two more or less; and it is only the very poor-spirited that count them seriously against the exhilaration. So the weary man whose bones are not supple enough to go ski-ing in the snows with Crashaw must e'en stay at home, and solace himself with pointing out the bruise upon us when we return. He will be happy, and we shall not mind; so all will be pleased. "Lift our lean souls," prays Crashaw in one of his poems, and it is a good prayer. He might have been thinking of some of his critics when he wrote it—only of course he was not.

There is another objection which, while not directed especially at Crashaw, yet includes him; and with this objection it may not be uninteresting to deal shortly here. There exists a class of person whose minds are preyed upon night and day by the suspicion that it is easier for Catholics to write poetry than for other people. The Catholic vocabulary differs in many respects so widely from that generally used, and is so much of a novelty to any unaccustomed to it, that these people feel they have grounds for suspecting that a Catholic passes for a poet simply because he expresses ideas, familiar enough to himself and his co-religionists, yet strange to others, in language again familiar to himself, but unusual to non-Catholic readers. This suspicion moreover, they feel, fully justifies them in taking up a very hoity-toity attitude towards the whole class of Catholic poets, in slighting them and undervaluing them, and in demanding

of them some standard which, since they do not themselves know what it is, they are tolerably sure of never obtaining. This class of person does exist, and is usually found amongst highly-cultivated people. Thus there was once a don who said, "beware of Catholic poets: they are dangerous!" What he exactly meant by this, none can say; but it is probable that some notion like the one I have sketched was rankling at the back of his mind.

Now there is more than a little reason underlying this notion. I shall proceed to show how. It might, indeed, be easy for a poet in the first heat of a spectacular conversion to strike attitudes in verse for the edification of uninitiated beholders, but would he impose on his elders in the Faith? Catholics are in fact so well-used to converts that they are even the less likely to be imposed upon by mere attitudinizing. With Catholics, then, since they speak the same language as the Catholic poet, must lie the power to judge. To this there might come the retort, "you Catholics, being a small body in England, would say anything to recommend yourselves"—but this I ignore as frivolous. The fact remains, therefore, that if a Catholic poet seems good to his own competent co-religionists, the non-Catholic world is fairly safe in recognizing him as a poet. And one of the purposes animating the promoters of this Library is to point out to Catholics the worthy ones of their own Faith, amongst whom Crashaw as a religious poet ranks high. After all every poet is a convert, and a passionate convert, to his own particular belief, be it what it may. They all in a manner speak their own language; and will all above a certain standard of technical excellence (and even below it in these degenerate days) appear good to those who understand it. To interpret a poet, therefore, you must in a manner feel with him. You may perhaps *criticize* him better if you disagree, but you will not *interpret* him so truly.

There remains, then, one last hare to course; and

with this quarry I in some part must identify myself. But, before letting slip the hounds, it is necessary to explain a little.

Everybody has heard of the "conceit"—a poetical figure that implies an elaborate, ingenious, and frequently a learned metaphor. To the Elizabethans the "conceit" meant simply a thought. Thus they will speak of a lyric as a "pretty *conceited* thing," meaning that the thought of the poem is graceful and ingenious. But, later, the "conceit" came to imply a far-fetched metaphor; and nowadays when we speak of a poet's "conceits," we imply a certain reproach.

The poetic period to which Crashaw belongs was especially remarkable for this form of expression. They revelled in it. Being for the most part men of considerable learning, and living at a time when learning of every kind was greatly in vogue, they used the metaphor to give play to their erudite wit. They rejoiced in recondite parallels, and fantastic similes. They burrowed into the lore of the ages to find more and more extraordinary metaphors wherewith to garnish their verses. The thing was a kind of game with them. They had discovered that learning could be made use of in poetry—just as our own modern realist poets have discovered that swear-words can be made to rhyme—and the discovery gave to life a new gusto. Their poems became positively encyclopædic. Chief amongst them in this particular stands John Donne, and he is the greatest among them all. But Shakespeare is a constant offender, only he does not belong to this period. Of the same calibre are Herbert (the singer of mild, secluded, rural Anglicanism) Vaughan, Traherne, and in a somewhat different degree, Crashaw. They are all one in their love of the ingenious, the elaborate, the fantastic, the unexpected, turn of thought.

Now there are people who object to Crashaw on this score. The "conceit" irritates them: it puts them off, and confuses them. It seems to them trivial

and unworthy. And, as I have admitted, in some part I agree with them. I do not like the "conceit"—only to think of Crashaw without his "conceits" is to think of another person. The habit was part of him. In George Eliot's magnificent novel, *Middlemarch*, a girl says to her husband, "Do you know, I often wish that you had not been a medical man." To which the husband replies, "Don't say that, it is like saying that you wish you had married another man!" And this is the precise case with Crashaw. The "conceit" is integral to his poetry. It was his poetic nature, and he could not help it. Fancies, fragrant, fantastic, impish, spring up beneath his tread as pansies might have done in the wake of the Fairy Queen. Sometimes he embarrasses himself with their luxuriance. They become a positive jungle. More fancies creep round him from the undergrowth, more come down to him from the trees, he is beset by them, as the girl was by goblins in Christina Rossetti's *Goblin-market*. He is like a man in a wood who looks into a clear pool to see his own face, but has not time to observe it because of the hordes of little odd woodland faces that are peeping over his shoulder. The very heavens seem to coruscate when he gazes at them. Can it be wondered, then, that his poems are full of odd notions, hard at first to grasp, exasperating often when understood, illuminating sometimes, oddly attractive just in themselves, and ingenious always? They came to him naturally, these teeming multitudes of figures and fancies. They crowded upon him, and would not be denied. So he gathered them up in armfuls and shed them upon his pages, as a child does rose-leaves on anything it loves. He brought them with him, like little crouching brownies, to surround the manger where Jesus lies. They surged with him in sorrowing fearful confusion up the hill of Calvary. They romp in ever-changing festoons round his joyous themes, and force their way, inquisitive as brownies are, into sacred and profane

places alike. Crashaw could not restrain them if he would; they scramble under his arms, climb over his shoulders, and *will* be in at whatever he gazes. [After all why should we object to them, these odd crowding fancies of Crashaw's? They lend a sort of gothic effect to his poetry. They are the flying buttresses, the gargoyles, the tooth-marks and rose-windows of Crashaw's Temple of the Lord.] Looked at from a distance as a whole the edifice is a most sublime one, one worthy of Him to whose honour it was raised. The reader should not think of each one separately as he comes upon it, but should take them quickly, even if he does not at once understand them all. Details can be examined at leisure when the whole structure has been surveyed. Taken so, the odd "conceits" and fantastic traceries need not distress him unduly. They all fall into place, and become an attractive feature of the whole.

✓ Such, then, is Richard Crashaw: a true poet, a true saint. Of his whole life there is no reproach recorded save that he was author of the two rampantly preposterous lines that I have quoted. His one error is that he carved an occasional gargoyle a little too freakishly. As a poet, he is difficult undoubtedly, an acquired taste, one who demands some labour from us in order to be appreciated. But he will well repay any trouble that we may have to take. The fact to remember is that he was a convert. If this be borne in mind much that is difficult about understanding him will be smoothed away. He was a convert, an ecstatic and a mystic. S. Francis, that insatiable hankerer after God's poets, would have loved him. He was a soul after the seraphic Father's own heart. If I had time and this were not a dignified introduction I would imagine him meeting the saint; I would picture S. Francis lurking around the house where Crashaw was, praying behind trees that God should give him this poet-soul to be his friend and

fellow-worker. I would describe Crashaw impelled, he knows not why, from that same house, and the little saint meeting him with open arms. Then I would show the poet arrayed in the rough brown habit, his feet bare upon the stones of the road, his wallet nearly empty, his staff in his hand, faring cheerfully upon the way, with song in his mouth and joy in his soul. How absurd, you say, to imagine an affinity between the 13th century saint and the 17th century ex-don of Cambridge! But there *is* an affinity, and one that it would not have taken S. Francis as long to discover as it has me to write, albeit I am writing quickly. S. Francis knew his men at first sight, and he would not have mistaken Brother Richard. If Crashaw had lived in Italy in the 13th century there might have been no poems of Richard Crashaw for me to descant upon; but an extra chapter or so of the *Fioretti* concerning the doings of the saintly Brother Richard of the Order of S. Francis. If S. Francis had written religious poetry, you may depend upon it, it would not have been what people are accustomed to understand by that term. It would have approximated much more closely to that of Richard Crashaw, poet and saint, when he sang:—

“Come, Love, and let us work a song,
Loud and pleasant, sweet and long;
Let lips and hearts lift high the noise
Of so just and solemn joys,
Which on His white brows this bright day
Shall hence forever bear away.

Lo, the new law of a new Lord
With a new lamb blesses the board;
The aged Pascha pleads not years,
But spies Love's dawn, and disappears.
Types yield to truths; shades shrink away;
And their night dies into our day.

But lest that die, too, we are bid
 Ever to do what He once did:
 And by a mindful mystic breath,
 That we may live, revive His death;
 With a well-bless'd bread and wine,
 Transumed, and taught to turn divine.

Since writing the foregoing pages the pleasant task of selecting pieces for this volume has taken me once again to the study of Crashaw; and the effect of this further reading has been to confirm without qualification every word that I have said. Indeed if qualification of any kind there were to be, it would take the form of dissociating myself even from those who may object to Crashaw on the score of his "conceits." His "conceits" really do not trouble: there is such a light of radiant sincerity about them all. They all melt into one perfect harmony; and, in detail, are often rather illuminating than otherwise. They force the thought home upon me by their very quaintness, their odd paradoxical inevitableness. Take this one for instance, from *Dies iræ, dies illa*, a poem on the Last Judgment. Crashaw is imagining the terror of that dread day. Hark, how he foretells the panic and sweet comfort of the just:—

O that book! Whose leaves so bright
 Will set the world in severe light.
 O that Judge! Whose hand, whose eye
 None can endure; yet none can fly.
 Ah then, poor soul, what wilt thou say?
 And to what patron choose to pray?
 When stars themselves shall stagger, and
 The most firm foot no more then stand.
 But Thou givest leave (dread Lord) that we
Take shelter from Thyself in Thee;
 And with the wings of Thine own dove
 Fly to Thy sceptre of soft love.
 Dear, remember in that day,
 Who was the cause Thou camest this way.
 Thy sheep was stray'd; and Thou would'st be
 Even lost Thyself in seeking me.

This is the very radium of religious poetry. It is so hot that one cannot at first distinguish the sensation from that of freezing. The extremes appear to meet in it. I have emphasized one line because it affords an admirable example of the infinitely concentrated subtlety of Crashaw's manner at his best. There is the suspicion of a "conceit" in this adorable paradox, and yet how simple and inevitable it is! How obvious it seems when said—yet not one in a thousand poets could have said it thus. And then the simple direct appealing tenderness of that word "Dear"! It is just like a child—when it touches us shyly with a soft hand to urge its pleading. Yet Thompson says that Crashaw is not really a religious poet, and likens his poetry to Milton's *Ode to the Nativity*—a thing so hard that, as Whistler said of a rival's sea, if you were to throw a pebble into it you would hear it rattle! Milton could write *Paradise Lost*, but it was beyond his scope to say "Dear" like that, as far beyond as the farthest star from this earth of ours. Indeed the more and the oftener I read Crashaw, the greater does my indignation become against those people who "are not accustomed to understand" by religious poetry such poems as these of Crashaw. One is tempted to ask what they *do* understand by religious poetry. I should very much enjoy a quiet chat with a representative of the class—but I doubt whether he would. One would almost conclude that Thompson stopped short at the lines I quoted earlier—those about the "walking baths"—and in the hysteria resulting from them created from his own imagination this monstrous class of person!

I should place first of all Crashaw's work, the peerless *Hymn to S. Teresa*, with its apology, and sister-piece, *The Flaming Heart*. Anyone who has not read Crashaw had better start off with them. They cannot fail to create an appetite for more. The man would be a stone that could read them unmoved. They exemplify in small compass the quintessential

juice of what *I* am accustomed to understand by religious poetry. Listen to the magnificent opening:—

“Love, thou art absolute sole lord
Of life and death!”

What a statement! It ought to begin the book. Every Catholic should repeat it each morning when he or she wakes, and as many times during the day as possible. It is a line that stuns the cosmos at a blow!

I might go on like this for a long time, taking this wonderful poem line by line and expatiating on each one. But I must not, because there are one or two other poems which I want to recommend especially to my readers. There is just one other extract from these three poems—it occurs in *The Flaming Heart*—to which I must draw especial attention. Crashaw is invoking S. Teresa:—

“O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day—”

Listen to that! Was there ever such a line? How extraordinarily apt it is applied to this saint, pre-eminent amongst saints for her triumphant sanity! “By thy large draughts of intellectual day!” Shelley would have loved the line—I wonder if he ever read it. How masterfully it hits off the saint's manner of receiving grace! It is just as though she inhaled it in breathing, as we do fresh air. It was as natural to her to breathe “large draughts of intellectual day,” as it is to us to breathe ordinary oxygen. It is a magnificent line. It acts upon us itself like a large draught of intellectual day. But every line in these poems to S. Teresa is worth pausing over and rolling on the tongue.

The poem on the Magdalene's tears is Crashaw at his least good. In this poem there is certainly founda-

tion for Thompson's criticisms. It is not good as a religious poem; and indeed difficult as any kind of a poem. It contains hosts of sparkling lines and pretty fancies, but it lacks "argument," so to say. It does not cohere. Taken piecemeal it contains the material of a fine poem but as a whole it is a failure.

Dies iræ, dies illa, I have already spoken of and quoted from. It is of the very best. *Lauda Sion Salvatorem* is also of this vein. I have quoted from it also. Both should be read; both will be enjoyed.

Then there is that great and splendid ode on the Sorrows of our Lady. This poem is very typical of that peculiar quality of *radiance* to which I have referred in Crashaw. Indeed it is one of the most typical of everything that I have said about the poet. The reader may judge for himself. In this poem Crashaw voices what so many Christians must often feel—that sorrow is almost the truest union with our Lord in this world. He prays Jesus and Mary to unite Themselves to him by sorrow. Listen:—

"Come wounds! Come darts!

Nail'd hands! and pierced hearts!

Come your whole selves, Sorrow's great Son and
Mother!

Nor grudge a younger brother

Of griefs his portion, who (had all their due)

One single wound should not have left for you."

That is not the voice of one "allured to such themes, not by their lessons, but by their poetic grandeur and beauty"; or I am much mistaken.

Now listen to *Vexilla Regis: the Hymn of the Holy Cross*:—

Look up, languishing soul! Lo, where the fair

Badge of thy faith calls back thy care,

And bids thee ne'er forget

Thy life is one long debt

Of love to Him, Who on this painful tree

Paid back the flesh He took for thee.

But enough of this! The poems shall speak for themselves. I am only standing in the way. Let the reader keep the book by him, and read the poems one at a time, or as he feels inclined. This sounds like a prescription, but—*que voulez-vous?* Crashaw is a spiritual prescription, I assure you. However, this is all I shall say. I shall close with an apology.

It may seem to some that I have in this essay made a rather unjust use of Francis Thompson. Lest this rankle in any heart, let me briefly explain my conduct. Thompson is such a great man that anything he says must be worth consideration. Thus, if he say anything wrong his error is a thousand times more in need of correction than a lesser man's would be—in precisely the degree that his is more marked by others. Therefore I have in a sense made Thompson's essay on Crashaw a kind of text for my defence of him. If any object I am sorry, but it is certainly not done because I cherish any antipathy to Thompson. On the contrary I have always liked his poetry the more because in places it is reminiscent of Crashaw. I may finish then with Brutus's defence of his attack on Cæsar and say to my readers: "if there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Thompson's, to him I say that my love to Thompson is no less than his. If then that friend demand why I rose against Thompson, this is my answer: not that I loved Thompson less, but that I loved Crashaw more."

This exactly expresses my attitude, and with this defence I stand aside and leave my readers to the poems.

CARMEN
DEO NOSTRO,

TE DECET HYMNUS
SACRED POEMS,

COLLECTED,
CORRECTED,
AUGMENTED,

Most humbly Presented.

To

MY LADY
THE COUNTESS OF
DENBIGH

BY

Her most devoted Servant,

R. C.

In hearty acknowledgment of his immortal
obligation to her Goodness & Charity.

AT PARIS,

By PETER TARGA, Printer to the Arch-
bishope of Paris, in S. Victors street at
the golden sunne.

M. DC. LII.

TO THE NOBLEST AND BEST OF LADIES,
THE COUNTESS OF DENBIGH,

PERSUADING HER TO RESOLUTION IN RELIGION,
AND TO RENDER HERSELF WITHOUT FURTHER
DELAY INTO THE COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC
CHURCH.

[*Non vi.*

*'Tis not the work of force but skill
To find the way into man's will.
'Tis love alone can hearts unlock;
Who knows the Word, he needs not knock.]*

What Heaven-entreated heart is this,
Stands trembling at the gate of bliss?
Holds fast the door, yet dares not venture
Fairly to open it, and enter;
Whose definition is a doubt 5
'Twixt life and death, 'twixt in and out.
Say, ling'ring Fair! why comes the birth
Of your brave soul so slowly forth?
Plead your pretences (O you strong
In weakness!) why you choose so long 10
In labour of yourself to lie,
Nor daring quite to live nor die.
Ah! linger not, loved soul! a slow
And late consent was a long no;
Who grants at last, long time tried 15
And did his best to have denied:
What magic bolts, what mystic bars,
Maintain the will in these strange wars?

What fatal yet fantastic bands
Keep the free heart from its own hands? 20
So when the year takes cold, we see
Poor waters their own prisoners be,
Fettered, and lock'd up fast they lie
In a sad self-captivity.
The astonished Nymphs their flood's strange fate
deplore, 25
To see themselves their own severer shore.
Thou that alone canst thaw this cold,
And fetch the heart from its stronghold;
Almighty Love! end this long war,
And of a meteor make a star. 30
O fix this fair Indefinite!
And 'mongst Thy shafts of sov-reign light
Choose out that sure decisive dart
Which has the key of this close heart,
Knows all the corners of 't, and can control 35
The self-shut cabinet of an unsearch'd soul.
O let it be at last, Love's hour;
Raise this tall trophy of Thy power;
Come once the conquering way; not to confute
But kill this rebel-word "irresolute," 40
That so, in spite of all this peevish strength
Of weakness, she may write "resolved" at length.
Unfold at length, unfold fair flower,
And use the season of Love's shower!
Meet his well-meaning wounds, wise heart! 45
And haste to drink the wholesome dart.
That healing shaft, which Heaven till now
Hath in love's quiver hid for you.
O dart of Love! arrow of light!
O happy you, if it hit right! 50

It must not fall in vain, it must
 Not mark the dry regardless dust.
 Fair one, it is your fate; and brings
 Eternal words upon its wings.
 Meet it with wide-spread arms, and see 55
 Its seat your soul's just centre be.
 Disband dull fears, give faith the day;
 To save your life, kill your delay.
 It is Love's siege, and sure to be
 Your triumph, though His victory. 60
 'Tis cowardice that keeps this field,
 And want of courage not to yield.
 Yield then, O yield, that Love may win
 The fort at last, and let life in.
 Yield quickly, lest perhaps you prove 65
 Death's prey, before the prize of Love.
 This fort of your fair self, if't be not won,
 He is repulsed indeed, but you're undone.

TO THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME,
 THE NAME OF JESUS

A HYMN

I sing the Name which none can say
 But touched with interior ray:
 The name of our new peace: our good:
 Our bliss: and supernatural blood:
 The name of all our lives and loves. 5
 Harken, and help, ye holy doves!
 The high-born brood of Day; you bright
 Candidates of blissful light,

The heirs elect of Love, whose names belong
Unto the everlasting life of song; 10
All ye wise souls, who in the wealthy breast
Of this unbounded name, build your warm nest
Awake, my glory, Soul (if such thou be,
And that fair word at all refer to thee),
Awake and sing, 15
And be all wing;
Bring hither thy whole self; and let me see
What of thy parent Heaven yet speaks in thee.
O thou art poor
Of noble powers, I see, 20
And full of nothing else but empty me:
Narrow, and low, and infinitely less
Than this great morning's mighty business.
One little world or two
(Alas!) will never do; 25
We must have store.
Go, Soul, out of thyself, and seek for more.
Go and request
Great Nature for the key of her huge chest
Of Heavens, the self-involving set of spheres 30
(Which dull mortality more feels than hears).
Then rouse the nest
Of nimble Art, and traverse round
The airy shop of soul-appeasing sound:
And beat a summons in the same 35
All-sovereign name,
To warn each several kind
And shape of sweetness, be they such
As sigh with supple wind
Or answer artful touch; 40

That they convene and come away
To wait at the love-crowned doors of this illustrious
day.

Shall we dare this, my Soul? we'll do't and bring
No other note for 't, but the name we sing.

Wake lute and harp, and every sweet-lipped thing 45
That talks with tuneful string;

Start into life and leap with me
Into a hasty fit-tuned harmony.

Nor must you think it much

T'obey my bolder touch: 50

I have authority in Love's name to take you,
And to the work of Love this morning wake you.

Wake, in the name

Of Him Who never sleeps, all things that are,

Or, what's the same, 55

Are musical;

Answer my call

And come along;

Help me to meditate mine immortal song.

Come, ye soft ministers of sweet sad mirth, 60

Bring all your household-stuff of Heaven on earth;

O you, my Soul's most certain wings,

Complaining pipes, and prattling strings,

Bring all the store

Of sweets you have; and murmur that you have no
more. 65

Come, ne'er to part,

Nature and Art!

Come; and come strong,

To the conspiracy of our spacious song.

Bring all the powers of praise, 70

Your provinces of well-united worlds can raise;

Bring all your lutes and harps of Heaven and Earth ;
 Whate'er co-operates to the common mirth :

Vessels of vocal joys,

Or you, more noble architects of intellectual noise, 75

Cymbals of Heaven, or human spheres,

Solicitors of souls or ears ;

And when you are come, with all

That you can bring or we can call :

O may you fix

80

For ever here, and mix

Yourselves into the long

And everlasting series of a deathless song ;

Mix all your many worlds above,

And loose them into one of love.

85

Cheer thee my heart !

For thou too hast thy part

And place in the great throng

Of this unbounded all-embracing song.

Powers of my soul, be proud !

90

And speak loud

To all the dear-bought Nations this redeeming Name,

And in the wealth of ~~one rich~~ word, proclaim

New similes to Nature. May it be no wrong,

Blest Heavens, to you and your superior song,

95

That we, dark sons of dust and sorrow,

A while dare borrow

The name of your delights, and our desires,

And fit it to so far inferior lyres.

Our murmurs have their music too,

100

Ye mighty Orbs, as well as you ;

Nor yields the noblest nest

Of warbling Seraphim to the ears of Love,

A choicer lesson than the joyful breast

Of a poor panting turtle-dove.

105

And we, low worms, have leave to do
The same bright business (ye Third Heavens) with you,
Gentle spirits, do not complain!

We will have care

To keep it fair,

110

And send it back to you again.

Come, lovely Name! Appear from forth the bright

Regions of peaceful light;

Look from Thine Own illustrious home,

Fair King of names, and come:

115

Leave all Thy native glories in their gorgeous nest,

And give Thy Self a while the gracious Guest

Of humble souls, that seek to find

The hidden sweets

Which man's heart meets

120

When Thou art Master of the mind.

Come lovely Name; Life of our hope!

Lo, we hold our hearts wide open!

Unlock Thy cabinet of Day,

Dearest Sweet, and come away.

125

Lo, how the thirsty lands

Gasp for Thy golden showers! with long-stretch's
hands.

Lo, how the labouring Earth

That hopes to be

All Heaven by Thee,

130

Leaps at Thy birth!

The attending World, to wait Thy rise,

First turn'd to eyes;

And then, not knowing what to do,

Turn'd them to tears, and spent them too.

135

Come royal Name; and pay the expense

Of all this precious patience;

O come away
And kill the death of this delay!
O see so many worlds of barren years 140
Melted and measured out in seas of tears:
O see the weary lids of wakeful Hope
(Love's eastern windows) all wide ope ✓
With curtains drawn,
To catch the day-break of Thy dawn. 145
O dawn at last, long-look'd for Day!
Take Thine own wings and come away.
Lo, where aloft it comes! It comes, among
The conduct of adoring spirits, that throng
Like diligent bees, and swarm about it. 150
O they are wise,
And know what sweets are suck'd from out it:
It is the hive,
By which they thrive,
Where all their hoard of honey lies. 155
Lo, where it comes, upon the snowy Dove's
Soft back; and brings a bosom big with loves;
Welcome to our dark world, Thou womb of Day!
Unfold thy fair conceptions, and display
The birth of our bright joys, O Thou compacted 160
Body of blessings: Spirit of souls extracted!
O dissipate Thy spicy powers,
(Cloud of condensèd sweets) and break upon us
In balmy showers!
O fill our senses, and take from us 165
All force of so profane a fallacy,
To think ought sweet but that which smells of Thee!
Fair, flowery Name, in none but Thee
And Thy nectareal fragrancý,
Hourly there meets 170
An universal synod of all sweets;

By whom it is definèd thus,
That no perfume
For ever shall presume
To pass for odoriferous, 175
But such alone whose sacred pedigree
Can prove itself some kin (sweet Name!) to Thee.
Sweet Name, in Thy each syllable
A thousand Blest Arabias dwell;
A thousand hills of frankincense; 180
Mountains of myrrh, and beds of spices
And ten thousand Paradises,
The soul that tastes Thee takes from thence.
How many unknown worlds there are
Of comforts, which Thou hast in keeping! 185
How many thousand mercies there
In Pity's soft lap lie a-sleeping!
Happy he who has the art
To awake them,
And to take them 190
Home, and lodge them in his heart.
O that it were as it was wont to be!
When Thy old friends of fire, all full of Thee,
Fought against frowns with smiles; gave glorious chase
To persecutions; and against the face 195
Of Death and fiercest dangers, durst with brave
And sober pace, march on to meet A GRAVE.
On their bold breasts, about the world they bore
Thee,
And to the teeth of Hell stood up to teach Thee,
In centre of their inmost souls, they wore Thee; 200
Where racks and torments strived, in vain, to reach
Thee.

Little, alas thought they
Who tore the fair breasts of Thy friends,
Their fury but made way
For Thee, and served them in Thy glorious ends. 205
What did their weapons but with wider pores
Enlarge Thy flaming-breasted lovers,
More freely to transpire

That impatient fire,
The heart that hides Thee hardly covers? 210
What did their weapons but set wide the doors
For Thee? fair, purple doors, of Love's devising,
The ruby windows which enrich'd the East
Of Thy so oft-repeated rising!
Each wound of theirs was Thy new morning, 215
And re-enthroned Thee in Thy rosy nest,
With blush of Thine Own blood Thy day adorning:
It was the wit of Love o'erflowed the bounds
Of Wrath, and made Thee way through all those
wounds.

Welcome, dear, all-adored Name! 220
For sure there is no knee
That knows not Thee:

Or, if there be such sons of shame,
Alas! what will they do
When stubborn rocks shall bow 225
And hills hang down their heaven-saluting heads
To seek for humble beds
Of dust, where in the bashful shades of Night
Next to their own low Nothing, they may lie,
And couch before the dazzling light of Thy dread
majesty. 230

They that by Love's mild dictate now
Will not adore Thee,
Shall then, with just confusion bow
And break before Thee.

IN THE HOLY NATIVITY OF OUR LORD GOD.

A HYMN SUNG AS BY THE SHEPHERDS.

THE HYMN

Chorus

Come, we shepherds, whose blest sight
 Hath met Love's noon in Nature's night;
 Come, lift we up our loftier song,
 And wake the sun that lies too long.

To all our world of well-stolen joy 5
 He slept; and dreamt of no such thing
 While we found out Heaven's fairer eye,
 And kissed the cradle of our King.

Tell him he rises now, too late
 To show us aught worth looking at. 10

Tell him we now can show him more
 Than he e'er show'd to mortal sight;
 Than he himself e'er saw before,
 Which to be seen needs not his light.

Tell him, Tityrus, where th' hast been, 15
 Tell him, Thyrsis, what th' hast seen.

TITYRUS

Gloomy night embraced the place
 Where the noble Infant lay.

The Babe looked up and showed His face;
 In spite of darkness, it was day. 20

It was Thy day, Sweet! and did rise,
Not from the East, but from Thine eyes.

Chorus: It was Thy day, Sweet, etc.

THYRSIS

Winter chid aloud, and sent
The angry North to wage his wars. 25

The North forgot his fierce intent,
And left perfumes instead of scars.

By those sweet eyes' persuasive powers,
Where he meant frost, he scattered flowers.

Chorus: By those sweet eyes', etc. 30

BOTH

We saw Thee in Thy balmy nest, |
Young dawn of our eternal Day!

We saw Thine eyes break from their East,
And chase the trembling shades away.

We saw Thee; and we blest the sight, 35
We saw Thee by Thine own sweet light.

Chorus: We saw Thee, etc.

TITYRUS

Poor world (said I), what wilt thou do
To entertain this starry Stranger?

Is this the best thou canst bestow? 40
A cold, and not too cleanly, manger?

Contend, the powers of Heaven and Earth,
To fit a bed for this huge birth?

Chorus: Contend the powers, etc.

THYRSIS

Proud world, said I, cease your contest, 45
And let the mighty Babe alone.

The phoenix builds the phoenix' nest, ✓
Love's architecture is his own.

The Babe whose birth embraves this morn,
Made His Own bed ere He was born. 50

Chorus: The Babe whose, etc.

TITYRUS

I saw the curled drops, soft and slow,
Come hovering o'er the place's head;
Offering their whitest sheets of snow
To furnish the fair Infant's bed; 55

Forbear, said I; be not too bold,
Your fleece is white, but 'tis too cold,

Chorus: Forbear, said I, etc.

THYRSIS

I saw the obsequious Seraphims,
Their rosy fleece of fire bestow, 60

For well they now can spare their wing,
Since Heaven itself lies here below.

Well done, said I; but are you sure
Your down so warm, will pass for pure?

Chorus: Well done, said we, etc. 65

TITYRUS

No, no! your King's not yet to seek
Where to repose His royal head;

See, see, how soon His new-bloom'd cheek
'Twixt's mother's breasts is gone to bed;
Sweet choice, said we! no way but so 70
Not to lie cold, yet sleep in snow.

Chorus: Sweet choice, said we, etc.

BOTH

We saw Thee in Thy balmy nest,
Bright dawn of our eternal Day!

We saw Thine eyes break from their East, 75
And chase the trembling shades away.

We saw Thee: and we blest the sight,
We saw Thee by Thine Own sweet light.

Chorus: We saw Thee, etc.

FULL CHORUS

Welcome all wonders in one sight! 80
Eternity shut in a span!

Summer in Winter, Day in Night!
Heaven in earth, and God in man!

Great, little One! whose all-embracing birth
Lifts Earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven to Earth. 85

Welcome, though not to gold nor silk,
To more than Cæsar's birthright is;

Two sister-seas of virgin-milk,
With many a rarely temper'd kiss

That breathes at once both maid and mother, 90
Warms in the one, cools in the other.

[She sings Thy tears asleep, and dips
Her kisses in Thy weeping eye;

She spreads the red leaves of Thy lips,
That in their buds yet blushing lie: 95

She 'gainst those mother-diamonds, tries
The points of her young eagle's eyes.]

Welcome, though not to those gay flies,
Gilded i' th' beams of earthly kings;

Slippery souls in smiling eyes: 100
But to poor shepherds, home-spun things;

Whose wealth's their flock; whose wit, to be
Well-read in their simplicity.

Yet when young April's husband-showers
Shall bless the fruitful Maia's bed, 105

We'll bring the first-born of her flowers
To kiss Thy feet, and crown Thy head.

To Thee, dread Lamb! Whose love must keep
The Shepherds, more than they their sheep.

To Thee, meek Majesty! soft King 110
Of simple Graces and sweet Loves:

Each of us his lamb will bring,
Each his pair of silver doves:

Till burnt at last in fire of Thy fair eyes,
Ourselves become our own best sacrifice. 115

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Rise, thou best and brightest morning!

Rosy with a double red;
With thine own blush thy cheeks adorning,
And the dear drops this day were shed.

All the purple pride that laces. 5

The crimson curtains of thy bed,
Gilds thee not with so sweet graces,
Nor sets thee in so rich a red.

Of all the fair cheek'd flowers that fill thee,
None so fair thy bosom strows, 10
As this modest maiden lily
Our sins have shamed into a rose.

Bid thy golden god, the sun,
Burnish'd in his best beams rise,
Put all his red-eyed rubies on; 15
These rubies shall put out their eyes.

Let him make poor the purple East,
Search what the world's close cabinets keep,
Rob the rich births of each bright nest
That flaming in their fair beds sleep 20

Let him embrace his own bright tresses
With a new morning made of gems;
And wear, in those his wealthy dresses,
Another day of diadems.

When he hath done all he may, 25
To make himself rich in his rise,
All will be darkness to the day
That breaks from one of these bright eyes.

And soon this sweet truth shall appear,
Dear Babe, ere many days be done: 30
The Morn shall come to meet Thee here,
And leave her own neglected sun.

Here are beauties shall bereave him
Of all his eastern paramours:
His Persian lovers all shall leave him, 35
And swear faith to Thy sweeter powers.

[Nor while they leave him shall they lose the sun,
But in thy fairest eyes find two for one.]

IN THE GLORIOUS EPIPHANY OF OUR
LORD GOD

A HYMN SUNG AS BY THE THREE KINGS

- 1 *King*: Bright Babe, Whose awful beauties make
The morn incur a sweet mistake;
- 2 *King*: For Whom the officious Heavens devise
To disinherit the sun's rise:
- 3 *King*: Delicately to displace 5
The day, and plant it fairer in Thy face;
- 1 *King*: O Thou born King of loves,
- 2 *King*: Of lights,
- 3 *King*: Of joys.
- Chorus*: Look up, sweet Babe, look up, and see 10
For love of Thee
Thus far from home
The East is come
To seek herself in Thy sweet eyes.
- 1 *King*: We who strangely went astray, 15
Lost in a bright
Meridian night,
- 2 *King*: A darkness made of too much day.
- 3 *King*: Beckon'd from far
By Thy fair star, 20
Lo, at last have found our way.
- Chorus*: To Thee, thou Day of Night! thou East of
West!
Lo, we at last have found the way
To Thee the World's great universal East,
The general and indifferent Day. 25

- 1 *King*: All-circling point! all-centring sphere!
The World's one, round, eternal year.
- 2 *King*: Whose full and all-unwrinkled face
Nor sinks nor swells with time or place;
- 3 *King*: But every where, and every while 30
Is one consistent, solid smile.
- 1 *King*: Not vex'd and tossed
- 2 *King*: 'Twixt Spring and frost,
- 3 *King*: Nor by alternate shreds of light,
Sordidly shifting hands with shades and
Night. 35

Chorus: O Little-All! in Thy embrace
The World lies warm, and likes his place;
Nor does his full globe fail to be
Kiss'd on both his cheeks by Thee:
Time is too narrow for Thy year, 40
Nor makes the whole World Thy half
sphere.

- 1 *King*: To Thee, to Thee
From him we flee.
- 2 *King*: From, him, whom by a more illustrious lie,
The blindness of the World did call the
eye. 45
- 3 *King*: To Him, Who by these mortal clouds hast
made
Thyself our sun, though Thine Own shade.
- 1 *King*: Farewell, the World's false light!
Farewell, the white
Egypt, a long farewell to thee, 50
Bright idol, black idolatry:
The dire face of inferior blackness, kist

And courted in the pompous mask of a more
specious mist.

2 *King:* Farewell, farewell
The proud and misplaced gates of
hell, 55

Perch'd in the Morning's way,
And double-gilded as the doors of Day:
The deep hypocrisy of Death and Night
More desperately dark, because more
bright.

3 *King:* Welcome, the World's sure way! 60
Heaven's wholesome ray.

Chorus: Welcome to us; and we
(Sweet!) to ourselves, in Thee.

1 *King:* The deathless Heir of all Thy Father's day;

2 *King:* Decently born! 65

Embosom'd in a much more rosy Morn:
The blushes of Thy all-unblemish'd mother,

3 *King:* No more that other
Aurora shall set ope
Her ruby casements, or hereafter hope 70
From mortal eyes
To meet religious welcomes at her rise.

Chorus: We (precious ones!) in you have won
A gentler Morn, a juster sun.

1 *King:* His superficial beams sun-burnt our skin; 75

2 *King:* But left within

3 *King:* The Night and Winter still of Death and
Sin.

Chorus: Thy softer yet more certain darts
Spare our eyes, but pierce our hearts:

1 *King:* Therefore with his proud Persian spoils 80

2 *King:* We court Thy more concerning smiles.

3 *King:* Therefore with his disgrace
We gild the humble cheek of this chaste
place;

Chorus: And at Thy feet pour forth his face.

1 *King:* The doating Nations now no more 85
Shall any day but Thine adore.

2 *King:* Nor (much less) shall they leave these eyes
For cheap Egyptian deities.

3 *King:* In whatsoe'er more sacred shape
Of ram, he-goat, or rev'rend ape; 90
Those beauteous ravishers oppress'd so sore
The too-hard tempted nations:

1 *King:* Never more
By wanton heifer shall be worn

2 *King:* A garland, or a gilded horn: 95
The altar-stall'd ox, fat Osiris now
With his fair sister cow,

3 *King:* Shall kick the clouds no more; but lean and
tame,
See his horn'd face, and die for shame:

Chorus: And Mithra now shall be no name. 100

1 *King:* No longer shall the immodest lust
Of adulterous godless dust
Fly in the face of Heaven; 2 *King:* as if
it were
The poor World's fault that He is fair.

3 *King*: Nor with perverse loves and religious
 rapes 105
 Revenge Thy bounties in their beauteous
 shapes;
 And punish best things worst, because they
 stood

Guilty of being much for them too good.

1 *King*: Proud sons of Death! that durst compel
 Heaven itself to find them Hell: 110

2 *King*: And by strange wit of madness wrest
 From this World's East the other's West.

3 *King*: All idolizing worms! that thus could crowd
 And urge their sun into Thy cloud; '
 Forcing His sometimes eclips'd face to be 115
 A long deliquium to the light of Thee.

Chorus: Alas! with how much heavier shade
 The shamefaced lamp hung down his head,
 For that one eclipse he made,
 Than all those he suffered! 120

1 *King*: For this he looked so big, and ev'ry morn
 With a red face confess'd his scorn;
 Or, hiding his vex'd cheeks in a hired mist,
 Kept them from being so unkindly kist.

2 *King*: It was for this the Day did rise 125
 So oft with blubber'd eyes;
 For this the Evening wept; and we ne'er
 knew,

But called it dew.

3 *King*: This daily wrong
 Silenced the morning sons, and damp'd their
 song. 130

Chorus: Nor was't our deafness, but our sins, that
thus

Long made th' harmonious orbs all mute to
us.

1 *King:* Time has a day in store
When this so proudly poor
And self-oppressèd spark, that has so
long 135

By the love-sick World been made
Not so much their sun as shade:
Weary of this glorious wrong,
From them and from himself shall flee
For shelter to the shadow of Thy tree; 140

Chorus: Proud to have gain'd this precious loss,
And changed his false crown for Thy cross.

2 *King:* That dark Day's clear doom shall define
Whose is the master Fire, which sun should
shine;

That sable judgment-seat shall by new
laws 145

Decide and settle the great cause
Of controverted light:

Chorus: And Nature's wrongs rejoice to do Thee
right.

3 *King:* That forfeiture of Noon to Night shall
pay

All the idolatrous thefts done by this Night
of Day; 150

And the great Penitent press his own pale
lips

With an elaborate love-eclipse:
To which the low World's laws
Shall lend no cause,

Chorus: Save those domestic which He borrows 155
From our sins and His Own sorrows.

1 *King:* Three sad hours' sackcloth then shall show
to us

His penance, as our fault, conspicuous:

2 *King:* And He more needfully and nobly prove
The Nations' terror now than erst their
love; 160

3 *King:* Their hated loves changed into wholesome
fears:

Chorus: The shutting of His eye shall open theirs.

1 *King:* As by a fair-eyed fallacy of Day
Misled, before, they lost their way;
So shall they, by the seasonable fright 165
Of an unseasonable Night,
Losing it once again, stumble on true Light:

2 *King:* And as before His too-bright eye
Was their more blind idolatry;
So his officious blindness now shall be 170
Their black, but faithful perspective of Thee.

3 *King:* His new prodigious Night,
Their new and admirable light,
The supernatural dawn of Thy pure Day;
While wondering they 175
(The happy converts now of Him
Whom they compell'd before to be their sin)
Shall henceforth see
To kiss him only as their rod,
Whom they so long courted as God. 180

Chorus: And their best use of him they worshipp'd,
be
To learn of him at least, to worship Thee.

- 1 *King*: It was their weakness woo'd his beauty;
But it shall be
Their wisdom now, as well as duty, 185
To enjoy his blot; and as a large black
letter
Use it to spell Thy beauties better;
And make the Night itself their torch to
Thee.
- 2 *King*: By the oblique ambush of this close night
Couch'd in that conscious shade 190
The right-eyed Areopagite
Shall with a vigorous guess invade
And catch Thy quick reflex; and sharply see
On this dark ground
To descant Thee. 195
- 3 *King*: O prize of the rich Spirit! with what fierce
chase
Of his strong soul, shall he
Leap at Thy lofty face,
And seize the swift flash, in rebound
From this obsequious cloud, 200
Once call'd a sun,
Till dearly this undone;
- Chorus*: Till thus triumphantly tamed (O ye two
Twin-suns!) and taught now to negotiate
you,
- 1 *King*: Thus shall that rev'rend child of Light, 205
2 *King*: By being scholar first of that new Night,
Come forth great master of the mystic Day;
3 *King*: And teach obscure mankind a more close
way,
By the frugal negative light
Of a most wise and well abusèd Night, 210
To read more legible Thine original ray;

Chorus: And make our darkness serve Thy day;
 Maintaining 'twixt Thy World and ours
 A commerce of contrary powers,
 A mutual trade 215
 'Twixt sun and shade,
 By confederate black and white,
 Borrowing Day and lending Night.

1 *King:* Thus we, who when with all the noble
 powers
 That (at Thy cost) are call'd, not vainly,
 ours: 220

 We vow to make brave way
 Upwards, and press on for the pure intelli-
 gential prey;

2 *King:* At least to play
 The amorous spies,
 And peep and proffer at Thy sparkling
 throne; 225

3 *King:* Instead of bringing in the blissful prize
 And fastening on Thine eyes:
 Forfeit our own
 And nothing gain
 But more ambitious loss at least, of
 brain; 230

Chorus: Now by abasèd lids shall learn to be
 Eagles, and shut our eyes that we may see.

THE CLOSE

[*Chorus*]: Therefore to Thee and Thine auspicious
 ray
 (Dread Sweet!) lo thus
 At least by us, 235

The delegated eye of Day
Does first his sceptre, then himself, in solemn
tribute pay.

Thus he undresses

His sacred unshorn tresses;

At Thy adorèd feet, thus he lays down 240

1 *King*: His gorgeous tire

Of flame and fire,

2 *King*: His glittering robe, 3 *King*: His sparkling
crown;

1 *King*: His gold, 2 *King*: His myrrh, 3 *King*: His
frankincense;

Chorus: To which he now has no pretence: 245
For being show'd by this Day's light, how
far

He is from sun enough to make Thy star,
His best ambition now is but to be,
Something a brighter shadow, Sweet, of
Thee.

Or on Heaven's azure forehead high to
stand 250

Thy golden index; with a duteous hand
Pointing us home to our own Sun,
The world's and his Hyperion.

TO THE QUEEN'S MAJESTY

[UPON HIS DEDICATING TO HER THE FOREGOING
HYMN]

MADAM,

'Mongst those long rows of crowns that gild your
race,

These royal sages sue for decent place:
The daybreak of the Nations; their first ray,
When the dark World dawn'd into Christian Day,
And smiled i' th' Babe's bright face: the purpling
bud 5

And rosy dawn of the right royal blood;
Fair first-fruits of the Lamb! sure kings in this,
They took a kingdom while they gave a kiss.
But the World's homage, scarce in these well-blown,
We read in you (rare queen) ripe and full grown. 10
For from this day's rich seed of diadems
Does rise a radiant crop of royal stems,
A golden harvest of crown'd heads, that meet
And crowd for kisses from the Lamb's white feet:
In this illustrious throng, your lofty flood 15
Swells high, fair confluence of all high-born blood:
With your bright head whole groves of sceptres bend
Their wealthy tops, and for these feet contend.
So swore the Lamb's dread Sire, and so we see't,
Crowns, and the heads they kiss, must court these
feet. 20

Fix here, fair majesty! may your heart ne'er miss
To reap new crowns and kingdoms from that kiss;
Nor may we miss the joy to meet in you
The aged honours of this day still new.

May the great time, in you, still greater be, 25
 While all the year is your epiphany;
 While your each day's devotion duly brings
 Three kingdoms to supply this day's three kings.

THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY CROSS

THE HOURS

FOR THE HOUR OF MATINS

The Versicle

LORD, by Thy sweet and saving sign!

The Responsory

Defend us from our foes and Thine.

V. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord

R. And my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise.

V. O, God, make speed to save me. 5

R. O, Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son,

and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall
 be, world without end. *Amen.* 10

THE HYMN

The wakeful Matins haste to sing
 The unknown sorrows of our King:
 The Father's Word and Wisdom, made
 Man for man, by man's betray'd;

The World's price set to sale, and by the bold 15
 Merchants of Death and Sin, is bought and sold:
 Of His best friends (yea of Himself) forsaken;
 By His worst foes (because He would) besieged and
 taken.

The Antiphon

All hail, fair tree
 Whose fruit we be! 20
 What song shall raise
 Thy seemly praise,
 Who brought'st to light
 Life out of death, Day out of Night!

The Versicle

Lo, we adore Thee, 25
 Dread LAMB! and bow thus low before Thee:

The Responsory

'Cause by the covenant of Thy cross
 Thou hast saved at once the whole World's loss.

The Prayer

O Lord JESU CHRIST, Son of the living God!
 interpose, I pray Thee, Thine Own precious 30
 death, Thy cross and passion, betwixt my soul
 and Thy judgment, now and in the hour of my
 death. And vouchsafe to grant unto me Thy
 grace and mercy; unto all quick and dead,
 remission and rest; to Thy Church, peace and 35
 concord; to us sinners, life and glory everlasting.
 Who livest and reignest with the Father, in the
 unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world with-
 out end. *Amen.*

FOR THE HOUR OF PRIME

The Versicle

LORD, by Thy sweet and saving sign! 40

The Responsory

Defend us from our foes and Thine.

V. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord,

R. And my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise.

V. O God, make speed to save me.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me. 45

V. Glory be to, etc.

R. As it was in the, etc.

THE HYMN

The early prime blushes to say

She could not rise so soon, as they

Call'd Pilate up, to try if he

Could lend them any cruelty;

Their hands with lashes arm'd, their tongues with lies,

And loathsome spittle, blot those beauteous eyes;

The blissful springs of joy; from whose all-cheering
ray

The fair stars fill their wakeful fires, the sun himself
drinks day. 55

The Antiphon

Victorious sigh

That now dost shine,

Transcribed above

Into the land of light and love;

O let us twine 60
 Our roots with thine
 That we may rise
 Upon Thy wings and reach the skies.

The Versicle

Lo, we adore Thee,
 Dread Lamb! and fall 65
 Thus low before Thee.

The Responsory

'Cause by the covenant of Thy cross
 Thou hast saved at once the whole World's loss.

The Prayer

O Lord JESU CHRIST, Son of the living God!
 interpose, I pray Thee, Thine Own precious 70
 death, Thy cross and passion, betwixt my soul
 and Thy judgment, now and in the hour of my
 death. And vouchsafe to grant unto me Thy
 grace and mercy; unto all quick and dead, remis-
 sion and rest; to Thy Church, peace and con- 75
 cord; to us sinners, life and glory everlasting.
 Who livest and reignest with the Father, in the
 unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without
 end. *Amen.*

THE THIRD

The Versicle

LORD, by Thy sweet and saving sign, 80

The Responsory

Defend us from our foes and Thine.
V. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord.
R. And my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise.

V. O God, make speed to save me.
 R. O Lord, make haste to help me. 85
 V. Glory be to, etc.
 R. As it was in the, etc.

THE HYMN

The third hour's deafen'd with the cry
 Of "Crucify Him, crucify."
 So goes the vote (nor ask them, why?) 90
 "Live Barabbas! and let God die."
 But there is wit in wrath, and they will try
 A "Hail" more cruel than their "Crucify."
 For while in sport He wears a spiteful crown,
 The serious showers along His decent Face run
 sadly down. 95

The Antiphon

Christ when He died
 Deceived the Cross;
 And on Death's side
 Threw all the loss.
 The captive World awaked and found 100
 The prisoner loose, the jailor bound.

The Versicle

Lo, we adore Thee,
 Dread LAMB! and fall
 Thus low before Thee.

The Responsory

'Cause by the covenant of Thy cross 105
 Thou hast saved at once the whole World's loss.

The Prayer

O Lord JESU CHRIST, Son of the living God!
 interpose, I pray Thee, Thine Own precious
 death, Thy cross and passion, betwixt my soul
 and Thy judgment, now and in the hour of my 110
 death. And vouchsafe to grant unto me Thy
 grace and mercy; unto all quick and dead,
 remission and rest; to Thy Church, peace and
 concord; to us sinners, life and glory everlasting.
 Who livest and reignest with the Father, in the 115
 unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without
 end. *Amen.*

THE SIXTH

The Versicle

LORD, by Thy sweet and saving sign!

The Responsory

Defend us from our foes and Thine.

V. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord, 120

R. And my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise.

V. O God, make speed to save me!

R. O Lord, make haste to help me!

V. Glory be to, etc.

R. As it was in the, etc. 125

THE HYMN

Now is the noon of Sorrow's night:
 High in His patience, as their spite,
 Lo, the faint Lamb, with weary limb
 Bears that huge tree which must bear Him.
 The fatal plant, so great of fame, 130
 For fruit of sorrow and of shame,

Shall swell with both, for Him; and mix
 All woes into one crucifix.
 Is tortured thirst itself too sweet a cup?
 Gall, and more bitter mocks, shall make it up. 135
 Are nails blunt pens of superficial smart?
 Contempt and scorn can send sure wounds to search
 the inmost heart.

The Antiphon

O dear and sweet dispute
 'Twixt Death's and Love's far different fruit!
 Different as far 140
 As antidotes and poisons are.
 By that first fatal tree
 Both life and liberty
 Were sold and slain;
 By this they both look up, and live again. 145

The Versicle

Lo, we adore Thee,
 Dread Lamb! and bow thus low before Thee.

The Responsory

'Cause by the covenant of Thy cross,
 Thou hast saved the World from certain loss.

The Prayer

O Lord JESU CHRIST, Son of the living God! 150
 interpose, I pray Thee, Thine Own precious
 death, Thy cross and passion, betwixt my soul
 and Thy judgment, now and in the hour of my
 death. And vouchsafe to grant unto me Thy
 grace and mercy; unto all quick and dead, 155
 remission and rest; to Thy Church, peace and

CARMEN DEO NOSTRO

concord; to us sinners, life and glory everlasting.
 Who livest and reignest with the Father, in the
 unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without
 end. *Amen.*

160

THE NINTH

The Versicle

LORD, by Thy sweet and saving sign,
The Responsory

Defend us from our foes and Thine.
V. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord,
R. And my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise. 165
V. O God, make speed to save me!
R. O Lord, make haste to help me!
V. Glory be to, etc.
R. As it was in the, etc.

THE HYMN

The ninth with awful horror hearkened to those groans
 Which taught attention even to rocks and stones. 170
 Hear, Father, hear! thy Lamb (at last) complains
 Of some more painful thing than all His pains.
 Then bows His all-obedient head, and dies
 His own love's, and our sins' GREAT SACRIFICE.
 The sun saw that, and would have seen no more; 175
 The centre shook: her useless veil th' inglorious
 Temple tore!

The Antiphon

O strange, mysterious strife
 Of open Death and hidden Life!
 When on the cross my King did bleed,
 Life seem'd to die, Death died indeed. 180

The Versicle

Lo, we adore Thee,
Dread Lamb! and fall
Thus low before Thee.

The Responsory

'Cause by the covenant of Thy cross,
Thou hast saved at once the whole World's
loss.

185

The Prayer

O Lord JESU CHRIST, Son of the living God! interpose, I pray Thee, Thine Own precious death, Thy cross and passion, betwixt my soul and Thy judgment, now and in the hour of my death. And vouchsafe to grant unto me Thy 190 grace and mercy; unto all quick and dead, remission and rest; to Thy Church, peace and concord; to us sinners, life and glory everlasting. Who livest and reignest with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without 195 end. *Amen.*

EVEN-SONG

The Versicle

LORD, by Thy sweet and saving sign!

The Responsory

Defend us from our foes and Thine.

V. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord!

R. And my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise. 200

V. O God, make speed to save me!

R. O Lord, make haste to help me!

V. Glory be to, etc.

R. As it was in the, etc.

THE HYMN

But there were rocks would not relent at this: 205
 Lo, for their own hearts, they rend His;
 Their deadly hate lives still, and hath
 A wild reserve of wanton wrath;
 Superfluous spear! But there's a heart stands by
 Will look no wounds be lost, no death shall die. 210
 Gather now thy Grief's ripe fruit, great mother-maid!
 Then sit thee down, and sing thine even-song in the
 sad tree's shade.

The Antiphon

O sad, sweet tree!
 Woeful and joyful we
 Both weep and sing in shade of thee. 215
 When the dear nails did lock
 And graft into thy gracious stock
 The hope, the health
 The worth, the wealth
 Of all the ransomed World, thou hadst the power 220
 (In that propitious hour)
 To poise each precious limb,
 And prove how light the World was, when it
 weighed with Him.
 Wide mayest thou spread
 Thine arms, and with Thy bright and blissful head 225
 O'erlook all Libanus. Thy lofty crown
 The King Himself is; thou His humble throne,
 Where yielding and yet conquering He
 Proved a new path of patient victory:
 When Wondering Death by death was slain, 230
 And our Captivity His captive ta'en.

The Versicle

Lo, we adore Thee,
Dread LAMB! and bow thus low before Thee.

The Responsory

'Cause by the covenant of Thy Cross,
Thou hast saved the World from certain loss. 235

The Prayer

O Lord JESU CHRIST, Son of the living, etc.

COMPLINE

The Versicle

LORD, by Thy sweet and saving sign!

The Responsory

Defend us from our foes and Thine.
V. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord,
R. And my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise. 240
V. O God, make speed to save me!
R. O Lord, make haste to help me!
V. Glory be to, etc.
R. As it was in the, etc.

THE HYMN

The Compline hour comes last, to call 245
Us to our own lives' funeral.
Ah, heartless task! yet Hope takes head,
And lives in Him that here lies dead.
Run, Mary, run! bring hither all the Blest
Arabia, for thy royal phoenix' nest; 250
Pour on thy noblest sweets, which, when they touch
This sweeter body, shall indeed be such.
But must Thy bed, Lord, be a borrowed grave,
Who lend'st to all things all the life they have?

O rather use this heart, thus far a fitter stone, 255
 'Cause though a hard and cold one, yet it is Thine
 own. *Amen.*

The Antiphon

O save us then,
 Merciful King of men!
 Since Thou wouldst needs be thus
 A Saviour, and at such a rate, for us; 260
 Save us, O save us, Lord.
 We now will own no shorter wish, nor name a
 narrower word;
 Thy blood bids us be bold,
 Thy wounds give us fair hold,
 Thy sorrows chide our shame: 265
 Thy cross, Thy nature, and Thy name
 Advance our claim,
 And cry with one accord,
 Save them, O save them, Lord!

THE RECOMMENDATION

These hours, and that which hovers o'er my end, 270
 Into Thy hands and heart, Lord, I commend,
 Take both to Thine account, that I and mine,
 In that hour and in these, may be all Thine.
 That as I dedicate my devoutest breath
 To make a kind of life for my Lord's death, 275
 So from His living, and life-giving death,
 My dying life may draw a new and never fleeting
 breath.

UPON THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

Here, where our Lord once laid His head,
Now the grave lies buried.

VEXILLA REGIS

THE HYMN OF THE HOLY CROSS

I

Look up, languishing soul! Lo, where the fair
Badge of thy faith calls back thy care,
 And bids thee ne'er forget
 Thy life is one long debt
Of love to Him, Who on this painful tree
Paid back the flesh He took for thee. 5

II

Lo, how the streams of life, from that full nest,
Of loves, Thy Lord's too liberal breast,
 Flow in an amorous flood
 Of water wedding blood. 10
With these He wash'd thy stain, transferr'd thy smart,
And took it home to His own heart.

III

But though great Love, greedy of such sad gain,
Usurp'd the portion of thy pain,
 And from the nails and spear 15
 Turn'd the steel point of fear:
Their use is changed, not lost; and now they move
Not stings of wrath, but wounds of love.

IV

Tall tree of life! thy truth makes good
What was till now ne'er understood, 20
 Though the prophetic king
 Struck loud his faithful string:
It was thy wood he meant should make the throne
For a more than Solomon.

V

Large throne of Love! royally spread 25
With purple of too rich a red:
 Thy crime is too much duty;
 Thy burthen too much beauty;
Glorious or grievous more? thus to make good
Thy costly excellence with thy King's own blood. 30

VI

Even balance of both worlds! our world of sin,
And that of grace, Heaven weigh'd in Him:
 Us with our price thou weighedst;
 Our price for us thou payedst,
Soon as the right-hand scale rejoiced to prove 35
How much Death weigh'd more light than Love.

VII

Hail, our alone hope! let thy fair head shoot
Aloft, and fill the nations with thy noble fruit:
 The while our hearts and we
 Thus graft ourselves on thee, 40
Grow thou and they. And be thy fair increase
The sinner's pardon and the just man's peace.

VIII

Live, O for ever live and reign
The Lamb Whom His own love hath slain!
And let Thy lost sheep live to inherit 45
That kingdom which this Cross did merit. *Amen.*

TO OUR B[LESSED] LORD UPON THE
CHOICE OF HIS SEPULCHRE

How life and death in Thee
Agree!
Thou hadst a virgin womb,
And tomb.
A Joseph did betroth 5
Them both.

CHARITAS NIMIA

OR, THE DEAR BARGAIN

Lord, what is man? why should he cost Thee
So dear? what had his ruin lost Thee?
Lord, what is man, that Thou hast over-bought
So much a thing of nought?

Love is too kind, I see; and can 5
Make but a simple merchant-man.
'Twas for such sorry merchandise
Bold painters have put out his eyes.

Alas, sweet Lord, what were't to Thee
If there were no such worms as we? 10
Heaven ne'ertheless still Heaven would be,
Should mankind dwell
In the deep Hell:
What have his woes to do with Thee?

Let him go weep 15
O'er his own wounds;
Seraphim will not sleep,
Nor spheres let fall their faithful rounds.

Still would the youthful spirits sing;
And still Thy spacious palace ring; 20
Still would those beauteous ministers of light
Burn all as bright,
And bow their flaming heads before Thee;
Still thrones and dominations would adore Thee;
Still would those ever-wakeful sons of fire 25
Keep warm Thy praise
Both nights and days,
And teach Thy loved name to their noble lyre.

Let froward dust then do its kind;
And give itself for sport to the proud wind. 30
Why should a piece of peevish clay plead shares
In the eternity of Thy old cares?
Why should'st Thou bow Thy awful breast to see
What mine own madnesses have done with me?

Should not the king still keep his throne 35
Because some desperate fool's undone?
Or will the World's illustrious eyes
Weep for every worm that dies?

Will the gallant sun
E'er the less glorious run? 40
Will he hang down his golden head,
Or e'er the sooner seek his Western bed,
Because some foolish fly
Grows wanton, and will die?

If I were lost in misery, 45
What was it to Thy Heaven and Thee?
What was it to Thy Precious Blood,
If my foul heart call'd for a flood?

What if my faithless soul and I
Would needs fall in 50
With guilt and sin;
What did the Lamb that He should die?
What did the Lamb that He should need,
When the wolf sins, Himself to bleed?

If my base lust 55
Bargain'd with Death and well-beseeming dust :
Why should the white
Lamb's bosom write
The purple name
Of my sin's shame? 60
Why should His unstain'd breast make good
My blushes with His own heart-blood?

O my Saviour, make me see
How dearly Thou hast paid for me ;
That lost again, my life may prove, 65
As then in death, so now in love.

SANCTA MARIA DOLORUM

OR, THE MOTHER OF SORROWS: A PATHETICAL
DESCANT UPON THE DEVOUT PLAINSONG OF
STABAT MATER DOLOROSA

I

In shade of Death's sad Tree
 Stood doleful she.
Ah she! now by none other
Name to be known, alas, but Sorrow's Mother.
 Before her eyes 5
Hers and the whole World's joys,
Hanging all torn, she sees; and in His woes
And pains, her pangs and throes:
Each wound of His, from every part,
All, more at home in her one heart. 10

II

What kind of marble then
Is that cold man
Who can look on and see,
Nor keep such noble sorrows company?
 Sure even from you 15
 (My flints) some drops are due,
To see so many unkind swords contest
 So fast for one soft breast:
While with a faithful, mutual flood,
|| Her eyes bleed tears, His wounds weep blood. 20

III

O costly intercourse
Of deaths, and worse—
Divided loves. While Son and mother
Discourse alternate wounds to one another,
Quick deaths that grow 25
And gather, as they come and go:
His nails write swords in her, which soon her heart
Pays back, with more than their own smart;
Her swords, still growing with His pain,
Turn spears, and straight come home again. 30

IV

She sees her Son, her God,
Bow with a load
Of borrow'd sins; and swim
In woes that were not made for Him.
Ah! hard command 35
Of love! Here must she stand,
Charged to look on, and with a steadfast eye
See her life die;
Leaving her only so much breath
As serves to keep alive her death. 40

V

✓ O mother turtle-dove! |
Soft source of love! |
That these dry lids might borrow
Something from thy full seas of sorrow!
O in that breast 45
Of thine (the noblest nest |

Both of Love's fires and floods) might I recline |
 This hard, cold heart of mine!
 The chill lump would relent, and prove
 Soft subject for the siege of Love. 50

VI

O teach those wounds to bleed
 In me; me, so to read
 This book of loves, thus writ
 In lines of death, my life may copy it
 With loyal cares. 55
 O let me, here, claim shares!
 Yield something in thy sad prerogative
 (Great queen of griefs!), and give
 Me, too, my tears; who, though all stone,
 Think much that thou shouldst mourn alone. 60

VII

Yea, let my life and me
 Fix here with thee,
 And at the humble foot
 Of this fair tree, take our eternal root.
 That so we may 65
 At least be in Love's way;
 And in these chaste wars, while the wing'd wounds
 flee
 So fast 'twixt Him and thee,
 My breast may catch the kiss of some kind dart,
 Though as at second hand, from either heart. 70

VIII

O you, your own best darts,
Dear, doleful hearts!
Hail! and strike home, and make me see
That wounded bosoms their own weapons be.
Come wounds! come darts! 75
Nail'd hands! and piercèd hearts!
Come your whole selves, Sorrow's great Son and
mother!
Nor grudge a younger brother
Of griefs his portion, who (had all their due)
One single wound should not have left for you. 80

IX

Shall I [in sins] set there
So deep a share,
(Dear wounds!), and only now
In sorrows draw no dividend with you?
O be more wise, 85
If not more soft, mine eyes!
Flow, tardy founts! and into decent showers
Dissolve my days and hours.
And if thou yet (faint soul!) defer
To bleed with Him, fail not to weep with her. 90

X

Rich queen, lend some relief;
At least an alms of grief,
To a heart who by sad right of sin
Could prove the whole sum (too sure) due to him.
By all those stings 95
Of Love, sweet-bitter things,

Which these torn hands transcribed on thy true
heart;

O teach mine, too, the art
To study Him so, till we mix
Wounds, and become one crucifix. 100

XI

Oh, let me suck the wine
So long of this chaste Vine,
Till drunk of the dear wounds, I be
A lost thing to the world, as it to me.
O faithful friend 105
Of me and of my end!
Fold up my life in love; and lay't beneath
My dear Lord's vital death.
Lo, heart, thy hope's whole plea! her precious breath
Pour'd out in prayers for thee; thy Lord's in death. 110

UPON THE BLEEDING CRUCIFIX

A SONG

I

Jesu; no more! It is full tide;
From Thy head and from Thy feet,
From Thy hands, and from Thy side,
All the purple rivers meet.

II

What need Thy fair head bear a part 5
In showers, as if Thine eyes had none?
What need they help to drown Thy heart,
That strives in torrents of its own?

III

[Water'd by the showers they bring,
The thorns that Thy blest brow encloses 10
(A cruel and a costly spring)
Conceive proud hopes of proving roses.]

IV

Thy restless feet now cannot go
For us and our eternal good,
As they were ever wont. What though? 15
They swim, alas! in their own flood.

V

Thy hands to give Thou canst not lift;
Yet will Thy hand still giving be.
It gives, but O itself's the gift:
It gives though bound; though bound 'tis free. 20

VI

But, O Thy side! Thy deep-digg'd side!
That hath a double Nilus going:
Nor ever was the Pharoan tide
Half so fruitful, half so flowing.

VII

No hair so small, but pays his river 25
To this Red Sea of Thy blood;
Their little channels can deliver
Something to the general flood.

VIII

But while I speak, whither are run
All the rivers named before? 30
I counted wrong: there is but one;
But O that one is one all o'er.

IX

Rain-swol'n rivers may rise proud,
 Bent all to drown and overflow;
 But when indeed all's overflow'd, 35
 They themselves are drownèd too.

X

This Thy blood's deluge (a dire chance,
 Dear Lord, to Thee) to us is found
 A deluge of deliverance;
 A deluge lest we should be drown'd. 40
 Ne'er wast Thou in a sense so sadly true,
 The well of living waters, Lord, till now.

UPON THE CROWN OF THORNS TAKEN
 DOWN FROM THE HEAD OF OUR
 BLESSED LORD, ALL BLOODY

Know'st thou this, Soldier? 'tis a much changed plant,
 which yet

Thyself didst set.
 ['Tis changed indeed; did Autumn e'er such beauties
 bring

To shame his Spring?]
 Oh! who so hard a husbandman could ever find 5
 A soil so kind?

Is not the soil a kind one (think ye) that returns
 Roses for thorns?

UPON THE BODY OF OUR B[LESSED]
LORD, NAKED AND BLOODY

They have left Thee naked, Lord; O that they had!
This garment too I would they had denied.
Thee with Thyself they have too richly clad;
Opening the purple wardrobe of Thy side.
O never could there be garment to[o] good 5
For Thee to wear, but this of Thine own blood.

THE HYMN OF SAINT THOMAS

IN ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
ADORO TE

With all the powers my poor heart hath
Of humble love and loyal faith,
Thus low (my hidden life!) I bow to Thee,
Whom too much love hath bow'd more low for me.
Down, down, proud Sense! discourses die! 5
Keep close, my soul's inquiring eye!
Nor touch nor taste must look for more,
But each sit still in his own door.

Your ports are all superfluous here,
Save that which lets in Faith, the ear. 10
Faith is my skill; Faith can believe
As fast as Love new laws can give.
Faith is my force: Faith strength affords
To keep pace with those pow'rful words.
And words more sure, more sweet than they, 15
Love could not think, Truth could not say.

O let Thy wretch find that relief
Thou didst afford the faithful thief.
Plead for me, Love! allege and show
That Faith has farther here to go, 20
And less to lean on: because then
Though hid as God, wounds writ Thee man;
Thomas might touch, none but might see
At least the suffering side of Thee;
And that too was Thyself which Thee did cover, 25
But here ev'n that's hid too which hides the other.

Sweet, consider then, that I,
Though allowed nor hand nor eye,
To reach at Thy loved face; nor can
Taste Thee God, or touch Thee man, 30
Both yet believe, and witness Thee
My Lord too, and my God, as loud as he.

Help, Lord, my faith, my hope increase,
And fill my portion in Thy peace:
Give love for life; nor let my days 35
Grow, but in new powers to Thy name and praise.

O dear memorial of that Death
Which lives still, and allows us breath!
Rich, royal food! Bountiful bread!
Whose use denies us to the dead; 40
Whose vital gust alone can give
The same leave both to eat and live.
Live ever, bread of loves, and be
My life, my soul, my surer self to me.

O soft, self-wounding Pelican!
Whose breast weeps balm for wounded man: 45

Ah, this way bend Thy benign flood
 To a bleeding heart that gasps for blood.
 That blood, whose least drops sovereign be
 To wash my world of sins from me. 50
 Come Love! come Lord! and that long day
 For which I languish, come away.
 When this dry soul those eyes shall see,
 And drink the unseal'd source of Thee:
 When Glory's sun Faith's shades shall chase, 55
 And for Thy veil give me Thy face. *Amen.*

LAUDA SION SALVATOREM

THE HYMN FOR THE BL[ESSED] SACRAMENT

I

Rise, royal Sion! rise and sing
 Thy soul's kind Shepherd, thy heart's King.
 Stretch all thy powers; call if you can
 Harps of heaven to hands of man.
 This sovereign subject sits above 5
 The best ambition of thy love.

II

Lo, the Bread of Life, this day's
 Triumphant text, provokes thy praise;
 The living and life-giving bread,
 To the great twelve distributed; 10
 When Life, Himself, at point to die
 Of love, was His Own legacy.

G

III

Come Love! and let us work a song
Loud and pleasant, sweet and long;
Let lips and hearts lift high the noise 15
Of so just and solemn joys,
Which on His white brows this bright day
Shall hence for ever bear away.

IV

Lo, the new law of a new Lord
With a new Lamb blesses the board: 20
The agèd Pascha pleads not years,
But spies Love's dawn, and disappears.
Types yield to truths; shades shrink away;
And their Night dies into our Day.

V

But lest that die too, we are bid 25
Ever to do what He once did:
And by a mindful, mystic breath,
That we may live, revive His death;
With a well-bless'd bread and wine,
Transumed, and taught to turn divine. 30

VI

The Heaven-instructed house of Faith
Here a holy dictate hath,
That they but lend their form and face;—
Themselves with reverence leave their place,
Nature, and name, to be made good, 35
By a nobler bread, more needful blood.

VII

Where Nature's laws no leave will give,
Bold Faith takes heart, and dares believe
In different species: name not things,
Himself to me my Saviour brings; 40
As meat in that, as drink in this,
But still in both one Christ He is.

VIII

The receiving mouth here makes
Nor wound nor breach in what he takes.
Let one, or one thousand be 45
Here dividers, single he
Bears home no less, all they no more,
Nor leave they both less than before.

IX

Though in itself this sov'reign Feast
Be all the same to every guest, 50
Yet on the same (life-meaning) Bread
The child of death eats himself dead:
Nor is't Love's fault, but Sin's dire skill
That thus from Life can death distil.

X

When the blest signs thou broke shalt see, 55
Hold but thy faith entire as He,
Who, howsoe'er clad, cannot come
Less than whole Christ in every crumb.
In broken forms a stable Faith
Untouch'd her precious total hath. 60

XI

Lo, the life-food of angels then
Bow'd to the lowly mouths of men!
The children's Bread, the Bridegroom's Wine,
Not to be cast to dogs or swine.

XII

Lo, the full, final Sacrifice 65
On which all figures fix'd their eyes:
The ransom'd Isaac, and his ram;
The manna, and the paschal lamb.

XIII

Jesu Master, just and true!
Our food, and faithful Shepherd too! 70
O by Thyself vouchsafe to keep,
As with Thyself Thou feed'st Thy sheep.

XIV

O let that love which thus makes Thee
Mix with our low mortality,
Lift our lean souls, and set us up 75
Convictors of Thine Own full cup,
Coheirs of saints. That so all may
Drink the same wine; and the same way:
Nor change the pasture, but the place,
To feed of Thee in Thine Own face. *Amen.* 80

DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA

THE HYMN OF THE CHURCH, IN MEDITATION OF
THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

I

Hear'st thou, my soul, what serious things
Both the Psalm and Sybil sings
Of a sure Judge, from Whose sharp ray
The World in flames shall fly away?

II

O that fire! before whose face 5
Heaven and Earth shall find no place.
O those eyes! whose angry light
Must be the day of that dread night.

III

O that trump! whose blast shall run
An even round with the circling sun, 10
And urge the murmuring graves to bring
Pale mankind forth to meet his King.

IV

Horror of Nature, Hell, and Death!
When a deep groan from beneath
Shall cry, "We come, we come," and all 15
The caves of Night answer one call.

V

O that Book! whose leaves so bright
Will set the World in severe light.
O that Judge! Whose hand, Whose eye
None can endure; yet none can fly. 20

VI

Ah then, poor soul, what wilt thou say?
And to what patron choose to pray?
When stars themselves shall stagger, and
The most firm foot no more then stand.

VII

But Thou givest leave (dread Lord!) that we 25
Take shelter from Thyself in Thee;
And with the wings of Thine Own dove
Fly to Thy sceptre of soft love.

VIII

Dear, remember in that Day
Who was the cause Thou cam'st this way. 30
Thy sheep was stray'd; and Thou would'st be
Even lost Thyself in seeking me.

IX

Shall all that labour, all that cost
Of love, and even that loss, be lost?
And this loved soul judged worth no less 35
Than all that way and weariness?

X

Just mercy, then, Thy reck'ning be
With my Price, and not with me;
'Twas paid at first with too much pain,
To be paid twice; or once, in vain. 40

XI

Mercy (my Judge), mercy I cry
With blushing cheek and bleeding eye:
The conscious colours of my sin
Are red without and pale within.

XII

O let Thine own soft bowels pay 45
Thyself, and so discharge that day.
If Sin can sigh, Love can forgive:
O say the word, my soul shall live!

XIII

Those mercies which Thy Mary found,
Or who Thy cross confess'd and crown'd, 50
Hope tells my heart, the same loves be
Still alive, and still for me.

XIV

Though both my prayers and tears combine,
Both worthless are; for they are mine.
But Thou Thy bounteous Self still be; 55
And show Thou art, by saving me.

XV

O when Thy last frown shall proclaim
The flocks of goats to folds of flame,
And all Thy lost sheep found shall be;
Let, "Come, ye blessed," then call me. 60

XVI

When the dread "*Ite*" shall divide
Those limbs of death from Thy left side;
Let those life-speaking lips command
That I inherit Thy right hand.

XVII

O hear a suppliant heart, all crusht
And crumbled into contrite dust.
My Hope, my Fear, my Judge, my Friend! 65
Take charge of me, and of my end.

THE HYMN, O GLORIOSA DOMINA

Hail, most high, most humble one!
 Above the world, below thy Son;
 Whose blush the moon beauteously mars,
 And stains the timorous light of stars. ✓

He that made all things had not done
 Till He had made Himself thy Son.

5

The whole World's host would be thy guest,
 And board Himself at thy rich breast.

O boundless hospitality!

The Feast of all things feeds on thee.

*from the
lost
Virgin's milk
again.*

The first Eve, mother of our Fall,

Ere she bore any one, slew all.

Of her unkind gift might we have

Th' inheritance of a hasty grave:

Quick buried in the wanton tomb

15

Of one forbidden bit,

Had not a better fruit forbidden it.

Had not thy healthful womb

The World's new eastern window been,

And given us heaven again in giving Him.

20

Thine was the rosy dawn, that spring the day

Which renders all the stars she stole away.

Let then the aged World be wise, and all

Prove nobly here unnatural:

'Tis gratitude to forget that other,

25

And call the maiden Eve their mother.

Ye redeem'd nations far and near,

Applaud your happy selves in her;

(All you to whom this love belongs)

And keep't alive with lasting songs.

30

Let hearts and lips speak loud and say,
 Hail, door of life, and source of Day!
 The door was shut, the fountain seal'd,
 Yet Light was seen and Life reveal'd.
 [The door was shut, yet let in day], 35
 The fountain seal'd, yet life found way.
 Glory to thee, great virgin's Son!
 In bosom of Thy Father's Bliss.
 The same to Thee, sweet Spirit! be done;
 As ever shall be, was, and is. *Amen.* 40

IN THE GLORIOUS ASSUMPTION OF OUR BLESSED LADY

THE HYMN

Hark! she is call'd, the parting hour is come;
 Take thy farewell, poor World, Heaven must go
 home.
 A piece of heavenly earth, purer and brighter
 Than the chaste stars whose choice lamps come to
 light her,
 While through the crystal orbs clearer than they 5
 She climbs, and makes a far more Milky Way.
 She's called! Hark, how the dear immortal Dove
 Sighs to his silver mate: "Rise up, my love!"
 Rise up, my fair, my spotless one!
 The Winter's past, the rain is gone: 10
 The Spring is come, the flowers appear,
 No sweets, but thou, are wanting here.
 Come away, my love!
 Come away, my dove!
 Cast off delay; 15

*familiar
of
affection*

The court of Heaven is come
 To wait upon thee home;
 Come, come away:

The flowers appear,
 Or quickly would, wert thou once here. 20
 The Spring is come, or if it stay
 'Tis to keep time with thy delay.

The rain is gone, except so much as we
 Detain in needful tears to weep the want of thee.

The Winter's past, 25
 Or if he make less haste

His answer is why she does so,
 If Summer come not, how can Winter go?

Come away, come away!

The shrill winds chide, the waters weep thy stay; 30
 The fountains murmur, and each loftiest tree
 Bows lowest his leafy top to look for thee.

Come away, my love!

Come away, my dove! etc.

She's call'd again. And will she go? 35

When Heaven bids come, who can say no?

Heaven calls her, and she must away,

Heaven will not, and she cannot stay.

Go then; go, glorious on the golden wings

Of the bright youth of Heaven, that sings 40

Under so sweet a burthen. Go,

Since thy dread Son will have it so:

And while thou go'st, our song and we

Will, as we may, reach after thee.

Hail, holy queen of humble hearts! 45

We in thy praise will have our parts.

[And though thy dearest looks must now give light
 To none but the blest heavens, whose bright

Beholders, lost in sweet delight,
 Feed for ever their fair sight 50
 With those divinest eyes, which we
 And our dark world no more shall see;
 Though our poor eyes are parted so,
 Yet shall our lips never let go
 Thy gracious name, but to the last 55
 Our loving song shall hold it fast.]

Thy precious name shall be
 Thyself to us; and we
 With holy care will keep it by us,
 We to the last 60
 Will hold it fast,
 And no Assumption shall deny us.
 All the sweetest showers
 Of our fairest flowers
 Will we strow upon it. 65
 Though our sweets cannot make
 It sweeter, they can take
 Themselves new sweetness from it.

Maria, men and angels sing,
 Maria, mother of our King. 70
 Live, rosy princess, live! and may the bright
Crown of a most incomparable light
Embrace thy radiant brows. O may the best
 Of everlasting joys bathe thy white breast.
 Live, our chaste love, the holy mirth 75
 Of Heaven; the humble pride of Earth.
 Live, crown of women; queen of men;
 Live, mistress of our song. And when
 Our weak desires have done their best,
 Sweet angels come, and sing the rest. 80

SAINT MARY MAGDALENE, OR THE WEEPER

Lo! where a wounded heart with bleeding eyes conspire,
Is she a flaming fountain, or a weeping fire?

concert

THE WEEPER

I

Hail, sister springs!
Parents of silver-footed rills!
Ever-bubbling things!
Thawing crystal! snowy hills!
Still spending, never spent! I mean
Thy fair eyes, sweet Magdalene!

MC

5

II

Heavens thy fair eyes be;
Heavens of ever-falling stars.
'Tis seed-time still with thee;
And stars thou sow'st, whose harvest dares
Promise the Earth to countershine
Whatever makes heaven's forehead fine.

10

III

But we are deceived all:
Stars indeed they are too true:
For they but seem to fall,
As Heaven's other spangles do;
It is not for our Earth and us,
To shine in things so precious.

15

IV

Upwards thou dost weep,
 Heaven's bosom drinks the gentle stream. 20
 Where th' milky rivers creep,
 Thine floats above, and is the cream. m c
 Waters above th' heavens, what they be
 We are taught best by thy tears and thee.

V

Every morn from hence, 25
 A brisk cherub something sips,
 Whose sacred influence
 Adds sweetness to his sweetest lips;
 Then to his music; and his song
 Tastes of this breakfast all day long. 30

VI

Not in the Evening's eyes,
 When they red with weeping are
 For the Sun that dies;
 Sits Sorrow with a face so fair.
 Nowhere but here did ever meet 35
 Sweetness so sad, sadness so sweet. ← m.c.

VII

When Sorrow would be seen
 In her brightest majesty:
 (For she is a Queen):
 Then is she dress'd by none but thee. 40
 Then, and only then, she wears
 Her proudest pearls; I mean, thy tears.

VIII

The dew no more will weep
 The primrose's pale cheek to deck:
 The dew no more will sleep 45
 Nuzel'd in the lily's neck;
 Much rather would it be thy tear,
 And leave them both to tremble here.

IX

There's no need at all,
 That the balsam-sweating bough 50
 So cooly should let fall
 His med'cinable tears; for now
 Nature hath learnt to extract a dew
 More sovereign and sweet from you.

X

Yet let the poor drops weep, 55
 (Weeping is the ease of Woe):
 Softly let them creep,
 Sad that they are vanquish'd so.
 They, though to others no relief,
 Balsam may be for their own grief. 60

XI

Such the maiden gem
 By the purpling vine put on,
 Peeps from her parent stem,
 And blushes at the bridegroom sun.
 This wat'ry blossom of thy eyne, 65
 Ripe, will make the richer wine.

XII

When some new bright guest
 Takes up among the stars a room,
 And Heaven will make a feast:
 Angels with crystal phials come
 And draw from these full eyes of thine,
Their Master's water, their own wine.

70

*Suppl. - Dolce
 Tasso's
 about 1570-1580
 17
 18*

XIII

Golden though he be,
 Golden Tagus murmurs though.
 Were his way by thee,
 Content and quiet he would go;
 So much more rich would he esteem
 Thy silver, than his golden stream.

75

XIV

Well does the May that lies
 Smiling in thy cheeks, confess
 The April in thine eyes;
 Mutual sweetness they express.
 No April e'er lent kinder showers,
 Nor May returned more faithful flowers.

80

XV

O cheeks! Beds of chaste loves,
 By your own showers seasonably dashed.
 Eyes! Nests of milky doves,
 In your own wells decently washed.
 O wit of Love! that thus could place
 Fountain and garden in one face.

85

Mc's

90

XVI

O sweet contest! of woes
 With loves; of tears with smiles disputing!
 O fair and friendly foes,
 Each other kissing and confuting!
 While rain and sunshine, cheeks and eyes, 95
 Close in ~~kind contrarieties~~ *use in the confusion*

XVII

But can these fair Floods be
 Friends with the bosom-fires that fill thee?
 Can so great flames agree
 Eternal tears should thus distil thee? 100
 O floods! O fires! O suns! O showers!
 Mixed and made ~~friends by Love's sweet~~ powers.

XVIII *dart.*

'Twas his well-pointed dart
 That digged these wells, and dressed this wine;
 And taught the wounded heart 105
 The way into these weeping eyne. *in C*
 Vain loves avaunt! ~~bold hands forbear!~~
 The Lamb hath dipped His white foot here.

XIX

And now where'er He strays,
 Among the Galilean mountains, 110
 Or more unwelcome ways;
 He's followed by two faithful fountains;
 Two walking baths, two weeping motions,
 Portable, and compendious oceans. *bad*

XX

O thou, thy Lord's fair store! 115
 In thy so rich and rare expenses,
 Even when He showed most poor
 He might provoke the wealth of princes.
 What Prince's wanton'st pride e'er could
 Wash with silver, wipe with gold? 120

XXI

Who is that King, but He
 Who call'st His crown, to be called thine,
 That thus can boast to be
 Waited on by a wandering mine,
 A voluntary mint, that strews 125
 Warm, silver showers where'er He goes?

XXII

O precious Prodigal!
 Fair spend-thrift of thyself! thy measure
 (Merciless love!) is all.
 Even to the last pearl in thy treasure: 130
 All places, times, and objects be
 Thy tears' sweet opportunity.

XXIII

Does the day-star rise?
 Still thy tears do fall and fall.
 Does Day close his eyes? 135
 Still the fountain weeps for all.
 Let Night or Day do what they will,
 Thou hast thy task: thou weepest still.

H

XXIV

Does thy song lull the air?
 Thy falling tears keep faithful time. 140
 Does thy sweet-breathed prayer
 Up in clouds of incense climb?
 Still at each sigh, that is, each stop,
 A bead, that is, a tear, does drop.

XXV

At these thy weeping gates 145
 (Watching their watery motion),
 Each wingèd moment waits:
 Takes his tear, and gets him gone.
 By thine eyes' tinct ennobled thus,
 Time lays him up; he's precious. 150

XXVI

Not, "so long she livèd,"
 Shall thy tomb report of thee;
 But, "so long she grievèd":
 Thus must we date thy memory.
 Others by moments, months, and years 155
 Measure their ages; thou, by tears.

XXVII

So do perfumes expire,
 So sigh tormented sweets, opprest
 With proud unpying fire,
 Such tears the suffering rose, that's vexed 160
 With ungentle flames, does shed, *u C*
 Sweating in a too warm bed.

XXVIII

no tears
 Say, ye bright brothers,
 The fugitive sons of those fair eyes,
 Your fruitful mothers!
 What make you here? what hopes can 'tice
 You to be born? what cause can borrow
 You from those nests of noble sorrow?

165

XXIX

tears
 Whither away so fast?
 For sure the sordid earth
 Your sweetness cannot taste,
 Nor does the dust deserve your birth.
 Sweet, whither haste you then? O say
 Why you trip so fast away?

170

XXX

We go not to seek
 The darlings of Aurora's bed,
 The rose's modest cheek,
 Nor the violet's humble head.
 Though the field's eyes too Weepers be,
 Because they want such tears as we.

175

180

XXXI

Much less mean we to trace
 The fortune of inferior gems,
 Preferr'd to some proud face,
 Or perched upon fear'd diadems:
 Crown'd heads are toys. We go to meet
 A worthy object, our Lord's feet.

WC 185

A HYMN TO THE NAME AND
HONOUR OF THE ADMIRABLE
SAINT TERESA

Foundress of the Reformation of the Discalced Carmelites,
both men and women; a woman for angelical height
of speculation, for masculine courage of performance,
more than a woman, who yet a child outran maturity,
and durst plot a martyrdom.

- Love, thou art absolute sole lord
Of life and death. To prove the word
We'll now appeal to none of all
- Those thy old soldiers, great and tall,
- ✓ Ripe men of martyrdom, that could reach down 5
- With strong arms their triumphant crown;
Such as could with lusty breath,
Speak loud into the face of Death
- ✕ Their great Lord's glorious name, to none
- ✓ Of those whose spacious bosoms spread a throne 10
- ✓ For Love at large to fill; spare blood and sweat;
And see him take a private seat,
Making his mansion in the mild
And milky soul of a soft child.
- Scarce has she learnt to lisp the name 15
- Of martyr; yet she thinks it shame
Life should so long play with that breath
Which spent can buy so brave a death.
She never undertook to know
What Death with Love should have to do; 20
- Nor has she e'er yet understood
Why to show love, she should shed blood,

Yet though she cannot tell you why,
She can love, and she can die. —

Scarce has she blood enough to make 25
A guilty sword blush for her sake;
Yet has she a heart dares hope to prove
How much less strong is Death than Love.

Be Love but there; let poor six years
Be posed with the maturest fears 30
Man trembles at, you straight shall find
Love knows no nonage, nor the mind;
'Tis love, not years or limbs that can }
Make the martyr, or the man.

Love touched her heart, and lo it beats } 35
High, and burns with such brave heats;
Such thirsts to die, as dares drink up
A thousand cold deaths in one cup.
Good reason; for she breathes all fire;
Her white breast heaves with strong desire 40
Of what she may, with fruitless wishes,
Seek for amongst her mother's kisses.

Since 'tis not to be had at home
She'll travel to a martyrdom.
No home for her's confesses she 45
But where she may a martyr be.

She'll to the Moors; and trade with them
For this unvalued diadem:
She'll offer them her dearest breath, }
With Christ's name in't, in change for death: } 50
She'll bargain with them, and will give
Them God; teach them how to live
In Him: or, if they this deny,
For Him she'll teach them how to die.
So shall she leave amongst them sown 55
Her Lord's blood; or at least her own.

Farewell then, all the World adieu!
 Teresa is no more for you.
 Farewell, all pleasures, sports, and joys
 (Never till now esteemèd toys) 60
 [Farewell, whatever dear may be,
 Mother's arms, or father's knee:
 Farewell house, and farewell home!
 She's for the Moors, and martyrdom.
 Sweet, not so fast! lo, thy fair Spouse, 65
 Whom thou seek'st with so swift vows;
 Calls thee back, and bids thee come
 T'embrace a milder martyrdom.
 Blest powers forbid, thy tender life
 Should bleed upon a barbarous knife: 70
 Or some base hand have power to rase
 Thy breast's chaste cabinet, and uncase
 A soul kept there so sweet: O no,
 Wise Heaven will never have it so.
 Thou art Love's victim; and must die 75
 A death more mystical and high: 76
 Into Love's arms thou shalt let fall
 A still-surviving funeral. 78
 His is the dart must make the death
 Whose stroke shall taste thy hallowed breath: 80
 A dart thrice dipp'd in that rich flame
 Which writes thy Spouse's radiant name
 Upon the roof of Heaven, where aye
 It shines; and with a sovereign ray
 Beats bright upon the burning faces 85
 Of souls which in that Name's sweet graces
 Find everlasting smiles: so rare,
 So spiritual, pure, and fair
 Must be th' immortal instrument
 Upon whose choice point shall be sent 90

A life so loved: and that there be
Fit executioners for thee,
The fairest and first-born sons of fire,
Blest seraphim, shall leave their quire,
And turn Love's soldiers, upon thee 95
To exercise their archery.

O how oft shalt thou complain
Of a sweet and subtle pain:
Of intolerable joys;
Of a death, in which who dies 100
Loves his death, and dies again,
And would for ever so be slain.
And lives, and dies; and knows not why
To live, but that he thus may never leave to die.

How kindly will thy gentle heart 105
Kiss the sweetly-killing dart,
And close in his embraces keep
Those delicious wounds, that weep
Balsam to heal themselves with; thus
When these thy deaths, so numerous, 110
Shall all at last die into one,

And melt thy soul's sweet mansion;
Like a soft lump of incense, hasted
By too hot a fire, and wasted
Into perfuming clouds, so fast 115

Shalt thou exhale to Heaven at last
In a resolving sigh, and then
O what? Ask not the tongues of men;
Angels cannot tell; suffice

Thyself shalt feel thine own full joys, 120
And hold them fast for ever there,
So soon as thou shalt first appear,
The moon of maiden stars, thy white
Mistress, attended by such bright

Souls as thy shining self, shall come, 125
And in her first ranks make thee room;
Where 'mongst her snowy family
Immortal welcomes wait for thee.

O what delight, when revealed Life shall stand,
And teach thy lips Heaven with His hand; 130
On which thou now may'st to thy wishes
Heap up thy consecrated kisses.
What joys shall seize thy soul, when she,
Bending her blessed eyes on Thee,
(Those second smiles of Heaven,) shall dart 135
Her mild rays through Thy melting heart.

Angels, thy old friends, there shall greet thee,
Glad at their own home now to meet thee.

All thy good works which went before
And waited for thee, at the door, 140
Shall own thee there; and all in one
Weave a constellation
Of crowns, with which the King thy Spouse
Shall build up thy triumphant brows.

All thy old woes shall now smile on thee, 145
And thy pains sit bright upon thee,
[All thy sorrows here shall shine,]
All thy sufferings be divine:
Tears shall take comfort, and turn gems,
And wrongs repent to diadems. 150
Even thy deaths shall live; and new-
Dress the soul, that erst they slew.
Thy wounds shall blush to such bright scars
As keep account of the Lamb's wars.

Those rare works where thou shalt leave writ 155
Love's noble history, with wit
Taught thee by none but Him, while here
They feed our souls, shall clothe thine there.

Each heavenly word, by whose hid flame
Our hard hearts shall strike fire, the same 160
Shall flourish on thy brows, and be
Both fire to us and flame to thee;
Whose light shall live bright in thy face
By glory, in our hearts by grace.

Thou shalt look round about, and see 165
Thousands of crown'd souls throng to be
Themselves thy crown: sons of thy vows,
The virgin-births with which thy sovereign Spouse
Made fruitful thy fair soul. Go now
And with them all about thee, bow 170
To Him; put on (He'll say,) put on
(My rosy love) that thy rich zone
Sparkling with the sacred flames
Of thousand souls, whose happy names
Heaven keep upon thy score: (Thy bright 175
Life brought them first to kiss the light,
That kindled them to stars,) and so
Thou with the Lamb, thy Lord, shalt go,
And whereso'er He sets His white
Steps, walk with Him those ways of light, 180
Which who in death would live to see,
Must learn in life to die like thee.

AN APOLOGY FOR THE FOREGOING HYMN

AS HAVING BEEN WRIT WHEN THE AUTHOR WAS
YET AMONG THE PROTESTANTS

Thus have I back again to thy bright name,
(Fair flood of holy fires!) transfus'd the flame
I took from reading thee; 'tis to thy wrong,
I know, that in my weak and worthless song
Thou here art set to shine, where thy full day 5
Scarce dawns. O pardon, if I dare to say
Thine own dear books are guilty. For from thence
I learn'd to know that Love is eloquence.
That hopeful maxim gave me heart to try
If, what to other tongues is tuned so high, 10
Thy praise might not speak English too: forbid
(By all thy mysteries that there lie hid)
Forbid it, mighty Love! let no fond hate
Of names and words so far prejudicate.
Souls are not Spaniards too: one friendly flood 15
Of baptism blends them all into a blood.
Christ's faith makes but one body of all souls,
And Love's that body's soul; no law controls
Our free traffic for Heaven; we may maintain
Peace, sure, with piety, though it come from Spain. 20
What soul soe'er, in any language, can
Speak Heav'n like her's, is my soul's countryman.
O 'tis not Spanish, but 'tis Heav'n she speaks!
'Tis Heav'n that lies in ambush there, and breaks
From thence into the wondering reader's breast; 25
Who feels his warm heart [hatch'd] into a nest

Of little eagles and young loves, whose high
Flights scorn the lazy dust, and things that die.

There are enow whose draughts (as deep as Hell)
Drink up all Spain in sack. Let my soul swell 30
With thee, strong wine of Love; let others swim
In puddles; we will pledge this seraphim
Bowls full of richer blood than blush of grape
Was ever guilty of. Change we too our shape,
(My soul,) Some drink from men to beasts, O then 35
Drink we till we prove more, not less than men,
And turn not beasts, but angels. Let the King
Me ever into these His cellars bring,
Where flows such wine as we can have of none
But Him Who trod the wine-press all alone; 40
Wine of youth, life, and the sweet deaths of Love;
Wine of immortal mixture; which can prove
Its tincture from the rosy nectar; wine
That can exalt weak earth; and so refine
Our dust, that, at one draught, Mortality 45
May drink itself up, and forget to die.

THE FLAMING HEART.

UPON THE BOOK AND PICTURE OF THE SERAPHICAL
SAINT TERESA, AS SHE IS USUALLY EXPRESSED
WITH A SERAPHIM BESIDE HER

Well-meaning readers! you that come as friends,
And catch the precious name this piece pretends;
Make not too much haste to admire
That fair-cheek'd fallacy of fire.

That is a seraphim, they say, 5
And this the great Teresia.

Readers, be ruled by me; and make
Here a well-placed and wise mistake;
You must transpose the picture quite,
And spell it wrong to read it right; 10
Read him for her, and her for him,
And call the saint the seraphim.

Painter, what didst thou understand
To put her dart into his hand?
See, even the years and size of him 15
Shows this the mother-seraphim.

This is the mistress-flame; and duteous he
Her happy fire-works, here, comes down to see.
O most poor-spirited of men!

Had thy cold pencil kiss'd her pen, 20
Thou couldst not so unkindly err
To show us this faint shade for her.

Why, man, this speaks pure mortal frame;
And mocks with female frost Love's manly flame.
One would suspect thou meant'st to paint 25
Some weak, inferior, woman-saint.

But had thy pale-faced purple took
Fire from the burning cheeks of that bright book,
Thou wouldst on her have heap'd up all
That could be form'd seraphical; 30

Whate'er this youth of fire wears fair,
Rosy fingers, radiant hair,
Glowing cheeks, and glist'ring wings,
All those fair and fragrant things,
But before all, that fiery dart 35
Had fill'd the hand of this great heart.

Do then, as equal right requires;
Since his the blushes be, and her's the fires,

Resume and rectify thy rude design ;

Undress thy seraphim into mine ;

40

Redeem this injury of thy art,

Give him the veil, give her the dart.

Give him the veil, that he may cover

The red cheeks of a rivall'd lover ;

Ashamed that our world now can show

45

Nests of new seraphims here below.

Give her the dart, for it is she X

(Fair youth) shoots both thy shaft and thee ;

Say, all ye wise and well-pierced hearts

That live and die amidst her darts,

50

What is't your tasteful spirits do prove

In that rare life of her, and Love ?

Say, and bear witness. Sends she not X

A seraphim at every shot ?

What magazines of immortal arms there shine !

55

Heaven's great artillery in each love-spun line.

Give then the dart to her who gives the flame ; //

Give him the veil, who gives the shame.

But if it be the frequent fate

Of worse faults to be fortunate ;

60

If all's prescription ; and proud wrong

Harkens not to an humble song ;

For all the gallantry of him,

Give me the suffering seraphim.

His be the bravery of all those bright things,

65

The glowing cheeks, the glistening wings ;

The rosy hand, the radiant dart ;

Leave her alone the flaming heart, X

Leave her that ; and thou shalt leave her

Not one loose shaft, but Love's whole quiver ;

70

For in Love's field was never found

A nobler weapon than a wound.

\ Love's passives are his activ'st part:

The wounded is the wounding heart.

O heart! equal poise of Love's both parts, 75

Big alike with wound and darts.

Live in these conquering leaves; live all the same;

And walk through all tongues one triumphant flame.

Live here great heart; and love, and die, and kill;

And bleed, and wound; and yield and conquer
still. 80

Let this immortal life where'er it comes

Walk in a crowd of loves and martyrdoms.

Let mystic deaths wait on't; and wise souls be

The love-slain witnesses of this life of thee.

O sweet incendiary! show here thy art, 85

Upon this carcass of a hard cold heart;

Let all thy scatter'd shafts of light that play

Among the leaves of thy large books of day,

Combined against this breast at once break in

And take away from me myself and sin; 90

This gracious robbery shall thy bounty be,

And my best fortunes such fair spoils of me.

O thou undaunted daughter of desires!

By all thy dower of lights and fires;

By all the eagle in thee, all the dove; 95

By all thy lives and deaths of love;

By thy large draughts of intellectual day, ~ ?

And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;

By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,

By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire; 100

By the full kingdom of that final kiss

That seized thy parting soul, and seal'd thee His;

101 By all the heav'ns thou hast in Him

(Fair sister of the seraphim!)

By all of Him we have in thee;
Leave nothing of myself in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may die.

105

A SONG [OF DIVINE LOVE]

Lord, when the sense of Thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek Thy face,
Thy blessèd eyes breed such desire,
I die in Love's delicious fire.

O Love, I am thy sacrifice!
Be still triumphant, blessed eyes!
Still shine on me, fair suns! that I
Still may behold, though still I die.

5

SECOND PART

Though still I die, I live again;
Still longing so to be still slain;
So gainful is such loss of breath;
I die even in desire of death.

10

Still live in me this loving strife
Of living death and dying life;
For while thou sweetly slayest me
Dead to myself, I live in Thee.

15

PRAYER

AN ODE WHICH WAS PREFIXED TO A LITTLE
PRAYER-BOOK GIVEN TO A YOUNG GENTLEWOMAN

Lo here a little volume, but great book!
 [(Fear it not, sweet,
 It is no hypocrite),
 Much larger in itself than in its look.]
 A nest of new-born sweets; 5
 Whose native fires disdaining
 To lie thus folded, and complaining
 Of these ignoble sheets,
 Affect more comely bands
 (Fair one) from thy kind hands; 10
 And confidently look
 To find the rest
 Of a rich binding in your breast.
 It is, in one choice handful, Heaven; and all
 Heaven's royal host; encamp'd thus small 15
 To prove that true, Schools use to tell,
 Ten thousand angels in one point can dwell.
 It is Love's great artillery
 Which here contracts itself, and comes to lie
 Close-couched in your white bosom; and from
 thence, 20
 As from a snowy fortress of defence,
 Against the ghostly foes to take your part,
 And fortify the hold of your chaste heart.
 It is an armoury of light;
 Let constant use but keep it bright, 25

You'll find it yields,
To holy hands and humble hearts,
More swords and shields
Than sin hath snares, or Hell hath darts.
Only be sure 30
The hands be pure
That hold these weapons; and the eyes
Those of turtles, chaste and true;
Wakeful and wise:
Here is a friend shall fight for you, 35
Hold but this book before your heart,
Let prayer alone to play his part;
But O the heart,
That studies this high art,
Must be a sure house-keeper: 40
And yet no sleeper.
Dear soul, be strong!
Mercy will come ere long,
And bring his bosom fraught with blessings,
Flowers of never-fading graces, 45
To make immortal dressings
For worthy souls, whose wise embraces
Store up themselves for Him, Who is alone
The Spouse of virgins, and the virgin's Son.
But if the noble Bridegroom, when He come 50
Shall find the loitering heart from home;
Leaving her chaste abode
To gad abroad
Among the gay mates of the god of flies;
To take her pleasure, and to play 55
And keep the devil's holiday;
To dance [in] th' sunshine of some smiling
But beguiling

Sphere of sweet and sugar'd lies;
 Some slippery pair, 60
Of false, perhaps as fair,
Flattering but forswearing, eyes;
Doubtless some other heart
 Will get the start
Meanwhile, and stepping in before, 65
Will take possession of that sacred store
Of hidden sweets and holy joys;
Words which are not heard with ears
(Those tumultuous shops of noise)
Effectual whispers, whose still voice 70
The soul itself more feels than hears;
Amorous languishments, luminous trances;
Sights which are not seen with eyes;
Spiritual and soul-piercing glances,
Whose pure and subtle lightning flies 75
Home to the heart, and sets the house on fire
And melts it down in sweet desire:
 Yet does not stay
To ask the windows' leave to pass that way;
Delicious deaths, soft exhalations 80
Of soul; dear and divine annihilations;
 A thousand unknown rites
Of joys, and rarified delights;
An hundred thousand goods, glories, and graces;
 And many a mystic thing, 85
 Which the divine embraces
Of the dear Spouse of spirits, with them will bring;
 For which it is no shame
That dull mortality must not know a name. |
 Of all this store 90
Of blessings, and ten thousand more

(If when He come
He find the heart from home)
Doubtless He will unload
Himself some otherwhere, 95
And pour abroad
His precious sweets
On the fair soul whom first He meets.
O fair! O fortunate! O rich! O dear!
O happy and thrice-happy she, 100
Selected dove
Who'er she be,
Whose early love
With wingèd vows,
Makes haste to meet her morning Spouse, 105
And close with His immortal kisses.
Happy indeed who never misses
To improve that precious hour,
And every day
Seize her sweet prey, 110
All fresh and fragrant as He rises,
Dropping with a balmy shower
A delicious dew of spices;
O let the blissful heart hold fast
Her heavenly armful; she shall taste 115
At once ten thousand paradises;
She shall have power
To rifle and deflower
The rich and roseal spring of those rare sweets,
Which with a swelling bosom there she meets: 120
Boundless and infinite—
—Bottomless treasures
Of pure inebriating pleasures.
Happy proof! she shall discover
What joy, what bliss, 125
How many heavens at once it is
To have her God become her Lover.

TO THE SAME PARTY

COUNSEL CONCERNING HER CHOICE

Dear, Heaven designèd soul!
 Amongst the rest
 Of suitors that besiege your maiden breast
 Why may not I
 My fortune try 5
 And venture to speak one good word,
 Not for myself, alas! but for my dearer Lord?
 You have seen already in this lower sphere
 Of froth and bubbles, what to look for here:
 Say, gentle soul, what can you find 10
 But painted shapes,
 Peacocks and apes,
 Illustrious flies,
 Gilded dunghills, glorious lies;
 Goodly surmises 15
 And deep disguises,
 Oaths of water, words of wind?
 Truth bids me say 'tis time you cease to trust
 Your soul to any son of dust.
 'Tis time you listen to a braver love, 20
 Which from above
 Calls you up higher
 And bids you come
 And choose your room
 Among His own fair sons of fire; 25
 Where you among
 The golden throng,

That watches at His palace doors
 May pass along,
 And follow those fair stars of yours ; 30
 Stars much too fair and pure to wait upon
 The false smiles of a sublunary sun.
 Sweet, let me prophesy that at last't will prove
 Your wary love
 Lays up his purer and more precious vows, 35
 And means them for a far more worthy Spouse
 Than this world of lies can give ye :
 Even for Him, with Whom nor cost,
 Nor love, nor labour can be lost ;
 Him Who never will deceive ye. 40
 Let not my Lord, the mighty Lover
 Of souls, disdain that I discover
 The hidden art
 Of His high stratagem to win your heart : 45
 It was His heavenly art
 Kindly to cross you
 In your mistaken love ;
 That, at the next remove
 Thence, He might toss you
 And strike your troubled heart 50
 Home to Himself, to hide it in His breast,
 The bright ambrosial nest
 Of Love, of life, and everlasting rest.
 Happy mistake !
 That thus shall wake 55
 Your wise soul, never to be won
 Now with a love below the sun.
 Your first choice fails ; O when you choose again
 May it not be amongst the sons of men !

ALEXIAS

THE COMPLAINT OF THE FORSAKEN WIFE OF
SAINT ALEXIS

THE FIRST ELEGY

I, late the Roman youth's lov'd praise and pride,
Whom long none could obtain, though thousands
tried;

Lo, here am left (alas!) for my lost mate
'T embrace my tears, and kiss an unkind fate.

Sure in my early woes stars were at strife, 5
And tried to make a widow ere a wife.

Nor can I tell (and this new tears doth breed)
In what strange path my lord's fair footsteps bleed.

O knew I where he wander'd, I should see
Some solace in my sorrow's certainty: 10
I'd send my woes in words should weep for me.
(Who knows how powerful well-writ prayers would
be?)

Sending's too slow a word; myself would fly.
Who knows my own heart's woes so well as I?

But how shall I steal hence? Alexis, thou, 15
Ah, thou thyself, alas! hast taught me how.

Love too, that leads the [way,] would lend the wings
To bear me harmless through the hardest things.

And where Love lends the wing, and leads the way,
What dangers can there be dare say me nay? 20

If I be shipwreck'd, Love shall teach to swim;
If drown'd, sweet is the death endured for him;

The noted sea shall change his name with me;
I 'mongst the blest stars a new name shall be;

And sure where lovers make their wat'ry graves, 25
The weeping mariner will augment the waves.
For who so hard, but passing by that way
Will take acquaintance of my woes, and say,
"Here 't was the Roman maid found a hard fate,
While through the World she sought her wand'ring
mate; 30
Here perish'd she, poor heart; Heavens, be my vows
As true to me as she was to her spouse.
O live, so rare a love! live! and in thee
The too frail life of female constancy.
Farewell; and shine, fair soul, shine there above, 35
Firm in thy crown, as here fast in thy love.
There thy lost fugitive th' hast found at last:
Be happy; and forever hold him fast."

THE SECOND ELEGY

Though all the joys I had fled hence with thee,
Unkind! yet are my tears still true to me:
I'm wedded o'er again since thou art gone,
Nor couldst thou, cruel, leave me quite alone.
Alexis' widow now is Sorrow's wife; 5
With him shall I weep out my weary life.
Welcome, my sad-sweet mate! Now have I got
At last a constant Love, that leaves me not:
Firm he, as thou art false; nor need my cries
Thus vex the Earth and tear the [beauteous] skies. 10
For him, alas! ne'er shall I need to be
Troublesome to the world, thus, as for thee:
For thee I talk to trees; with silent groves
Expostulate my woes and much wrong'd loves;
Hills and relentless rocks, or if there be 15
Things that in hardness more allude to thee,

To these I talk in tears, and tell my pain,
 And answer too for them in tears again.
 How oft have I wept out the weary sun!
 My wat'ry hour-glass hath old Time outrun. 20
 O I am learnèd grown: poor Love and I
 Have studied over all Astrology;
 I'm perfect in Heaven's state, with every star
 My skilful grief is grown familiar
 Rise, fairest of those fires; whate'er thou be 25
 Whose rosy beam shall point my sun to me,
 Such as the sacred light that erst did bring
 The Eastern princes to their infant King.
 O rise, pure lamp, and lend thy golden ray,
 That weary Love at last may find his way. 30

THE THIRD ELEGY

Rich, churlish Land, that hid'st so long in thee
 My treasures; rich, alas, by robbing me.
 Needs must my miseries owe that man a spite,
 Who'er he be, was the first wand'ring knight,
 O had he ne'er been at that cruel cost 5
 Nature's virginity had ne'er been lost;
 Seas had not been rebuked by saucy oars,
 But lain lock'd up safe in their sacred shores;
 Men had not spurn'd at mountains; nor made wars
 With rocks, nor bold hands struck the World's strong
 bars, 10
 Nor lost in too large bounds, our little Rome
 Full sweetly with itself had dwelt at home.
 My poor Alexis then, in peaceful life,
 Had under some low roof loved his plain wife;
 But now, ah me! from where he has no foes 15
 He flies, and into wilful exile goes.

Cruel, return, or tell the reason why
Thy dearest parents have deserved to die.
And I, what is my crime I cannot tell,
Unless it be a crime t' have loved too well. 20
If heats of holier love and high desire
Make big thy fair breast with immortal fire,
What needs my virgin lord fly thus from me,
Who only wish his virgin wife to be?
Witness, chaste Heavens! no happier vows I know 25
Than to a virgin grave untouch'd to go.
Love's truest knot by Venus is not tied;
Nor do embraces only make a bride.
The queen of angels (and men chaste as you)
Was maiden-wife, and maiden-mother too. 30
Cecilia, glory of her name and blood,
With happy gain her maiden vows made good.
The lusty bridegroom made approach—"Young man,
Take heed" (said she) "take heed, Valerian!
My bosom's guard, a spirit great and strong, 35
Stands arm'd to shield me from all wanton wrong.
My chastity is sacred; and my Sleep
Wakeful, her dear vows undefiled to keep.
Pallas bears arms, forsooth; and should there be
No fortress built for true Virginitv? 40
No gaping Gorgon this: none like the rest
Of your learn'd lies. Here you'll find no such jest.
I'm yours: O were my God, my Christ so too,
I'd know no name of Love on Earth but you."
He yields, and straight baptized, obtains the grace 45
To gaze on the fair soldier's glorious face.
Both mix'd at last their blood in one rich bed
Of rosy martyrdom, twice married.
O burn our Hymen bright in such high flame,
Thy torch, terrestrial Love, has here no name. 50

How sweet the mutual yoke of man and wife,
When holy fires maintain Love's heavenly life!
But I (so help me Heaven my hopes to see),
When thousands sought my love, loved none but thee.
Still, as their vain tears my firm vows did try, 55
" Alexis, he alone is mine " (said I).
Half true, alas! half false, proves that poor line,
Alexis is alone; but is not mine.

DESCRIPTION OF A RELIGIOUS
HOUSE AND CONDITION OF LIFE

(OUT OF BARCLAY)

No roofs of gold o'er riotous tables shining,
Whole days and suns devour'd with endless dining;
No sails of Tyrian silk proud pavements sweeping,
Nor ivory couches costlier slumbers keeping;
False lights of flaring gems; tumultuous joys; 5
Halls full of flattering men and frisking boys;
Whate'er false shows of short and slippery good
Mix the mad sons of men in mutual blood.
But walks and unshorn woods; and souls, just so
Unforced and genuine; but not shady though. 10
Our lodgings hard and homely as our fare,
That chaste and cheap, as the few clothes we wear;
Those, coarse and negligent, as the natural locks
Of these loose groves; rough as th' unpolished rocks.
A hasty portion of prescribed sleep; 15
Obedient slumbers, that can wake and weep,
And sing, and sigh, and work, and sleep again;
Still rolling a round sphere of still-returning pain.

Hands full of hearty labours; pains that pay
And prize themselves; do much, that more they
may, 20

And work for work, not wages; let to-morrow's
New drops wash off the sweat of this day's sorrows.
A long and daily-dying life, which breathes
A respiration of reviving deaths.

But neither are there those ignoble stings 25
That nip the blossom of the World's best things,
And lash Earth-labouring souls.

No cruel guard of diligent cares, that keep
Crown'd woes awake, as things too wise for sleep:
But reverent discipline, and religious fear, 30
And soft obedience, find sweet bidding here;
Silence, and sacred rest; peace, and pure joys;
Kind loves keep house, lie close, [and] make no
noise;

And room enough for monarchs, while none swells
Beyond the kingdoms of contentful cells. 35
The self-rememb'ring soul sweetly recovers
Her kindred with the stars; not basely hovers
Below: but meditates her immortal way
Home to the original source of Light and intellectual
day.

AN EPITAPH UPON A YOUNG
MARRIED COUPLE

DEAD AND BURIED TOGETHER

To these, whom Death again did wed,
This grave's their second marriage-bed;
For though the hand of Fate could force
'Twixt soul and body, a divorce,
It could not sunder man and wife, 5
'Cause they both lived but one life.
Peace, good Reader, do not weep.
Peace, the lovers are asleep!
They, sweet turtles, folded lie
In the last knot Love could tie. 10
And though they lie as they were dead,
Their pillow stone, their sheets of lead:
(Pillow hard, and sheets not warm)
Love made the bed; they'll take no harm;
Let them sleep: let them sleep on, 15
Till this stormy night be gone,
Till the eternal morrow dawn;
Then the curtains will be drawn
And they wake into a light,
Whose Day shall never die in Night. 20

DEATH'S LECTURE AND THE FUNERAL OF
A YOUNG GENTLEMAN

Dear relics of a dislodged soul, whose lack
Makes many a mourning paper put on black!
O stay a while, ere thou draw in thy head,
And wind thyself up close in thy cold bed.
Stay but a little while, until I call 5
A summons worthy of thy funeral.
Come then, Youth, Beauty, and Blood, all ye soft
powers,
Whose silken flatteries swell a few fond hours
Into a false eternity. Come man;
Hyperbolisèd nothing! know thy span! 10
Take thine own measure here, down, down, and bow
Before thyself in thine idea; thou
Huge emptiness! contract thy bulk; and shrink
All thy wild circle to a point. O sink
Lower and lower yet; till thy lean size 15
Call Heaven to look on thee with narrow eyes.
Lesser and lesser yet; till thou begin
To show a face, fit to confess thy kin,
Thy neighbourhood to Nothing!
Proud looks, and lofty eyelids, here put on 20
Yourselves in your unfeign'd reflection;
Here, gallant ladies! this unpartial glass
(Through all your painting) shows you your true face.
These death-seal'd lips are they dare give the lie
To the loud boasts of poor Mortality; 25

These curtain'd windows, this retirèd eye
 Out-stares the lids of large-look'd Tyranny :
 This posture is the brave one; this that lies
 Thus low, stands up (methinks) thus, and defies
 The World. All-daring dust and ashes! only you 30
 Of all interpreters read Nature true.

TEMPERANCE

OF THE CHEAP PHYSICIAN, UPON THE TRANS-
 LATION OF LESSIUS

Go now, and with some daring drug,
 Bait thy disease, and whilst they tug,
 Thou, to maintain their precious strife
 Spend the dear treasures of thy life:
 Go take physic, doat upon 5
 Some big-named composition,—
 The oraculous doctors' mystic bills,
 Certain hard words made into pills;
 And what at last shalt gain by these?
 Only a costlier disease. 10
 [Go poor man, think what shall be
 Remedy 'gainst thy remedy.]
 That which makes us have no need
 Of physic, that's physic indeed.
 Hark hither, Reader: wilt thou see 15
 Nature her own physician be?
 Wilt see a man all his own wealth,
 His own music, his own health?
 A man, whose sober soul can tell
 How to wear her garments well? 20

Her garments that upon her sit,
 (As garments should do) close and fit?
 A well-clothed soul, that's not oppress'd
 Nor choked with what she should be dress'd?
 A soul sheath'd in a crystal shrine, 25
 Through which all her bright features shine?
 As when a piece of wanton lawn,
 A thin aerial veil, is drawn
 O'er beauty's face; seeming to hide,
 More sweetly shows the blushing bride: 30
 A soul, whose intellectual beams
 No mists do mask, no lazy steams?
 A happy soul, that all the way
 To Heaven, hath a Summer's day?
 Wouldst see a man whose well-warm'd blood 35
 Bathes him in a genuine flood?
 A man, whose tunèd humours be
 A seat of rarest harmony?
 Wouldst see blithe looks, fresh cheeks, beguile
 Age? Wouldst see December smile? 40
 Wouldst see nests of new roses grow
 In a bed of rev'rend snow?
 Warm thoughts, free spirits, flattering
 Winter's self into a Spring?
 In sum, wouldst see a man that can 45
 Live to be old, and still a man?
 Whose latest, and most leaden hours
 Fall with soft wings, stuck with soft flowers
 And when Life's sweet fable ends,
 Soul and body part like friends: 50
 No quarrels, murmurs, no delay:
 A kiss, a sigh, and so away?
 This rare one, Reader, wouldst thou see,
 Hark hither: and thyself be he!

HOPE

[BY A. COWLEY]

*Hope, whose weak being ruin'd is
Alike, if it succeed, or if it miss!
Whom ill or good does equally confound,
And both the horns of Fate's dilemma wound.
Vain shadow; that dost vanish quite 5
Both at full noon, and perfect night!
The stars have not a possibility
Of blessing thee.
If things then from their end we happy call,
'Tis Hope is the most hopeless thing of all. 10*

*Hope, thou bold taster of delight!
Who instead of doing so, devour'st it quite.
Thou bring'st us an estate, yet leav'st us poor
By clogging it with legacies before.
The joys which we entire should wed, 15
Come deflow'r'd virgins to our bed.
Good fortunes without gain imported be,
Such mighty custom's paid to thee.
For joy, like wine kept close, does better taste;
If it take air before his spirits waste. 20*

*Hope, Fortune's cheating lottery,
Where, for one prize, an hundred blanks there be.
Fond archer, Hope! who tak'st thine aim so far,
That still, or short, or wide, thine arrows are;
Thin empty cloud which th' eye deceives 25
With shapes that our own fancy gives!*

*A cloud, which gilt and painted now appears,
 But must drop presently in tears:
 When thy false beams o'er reason's light prevail,
 By ignes fatui for North stars we sail.* 30

*Brother of Fear, more gaily clad,
 The merrier fool o' th' two, yet quite as mad!
 Sire of Repentance! child of fond desire,
 That blow'st the chymic and the lover's fire,
 Still leading them insensibly on, 35
 With the strong witchcraft of "anon!"
 By thee the one does changing Nature through
 Her endless labyrinths pursue;
 And th' other chases woman; while she goes
 More ways and turns than hunted Nature knows. 40*

M. COWLEY.

M. CRASHAW'S ANSWER FOR HOPE

Dear Hope! Earth's dow'ry, and Heaven's debt!
 The entity of those that are not yet.
 Subtlest, but surest being! thou by whom
 Our nothing has a definition!
 Substantial shade! whose sweet allay 5
 Blends both the noons of Night and Day:
 Fates cannot find out a capacity
 Of hurting thee.
 From thee their lean dilemma, with blunt horn,
 Shrinks as the sick moon from the wholesome
 morn. 10

J

Rich hope! Love's legacy, under lock
Of Faith!—still spending, and still growing stock!
Our crown-land lies above, yet each meal brings
A seemly portion for the sons of kings.

Nor will the virgin-joys we wed 15
Come less unbroken to our bed,
Because that from the bridal cheek of Bliss,
Thou steal'st us down a distant kiss.
Hope's chaste stealth harms no more Joys maiden-
head

Than spousal rites prejudice the marriage-bed. 20

Fair Hope! our earlier Heav'n! by thee
Young time is taster to Eternity:
Thy generous wine with age grows strong, not sour,
Nor does it kill thy fruit, to smell thy flower.

Thy golden growing head never hangs down, 25
Till in the lap of Love's full noon
It falls; and dies! O no, it melts away
As does the dawn into the Day:

As lumps of sugar loose themselves, and twine
Their subtle essence with the soul of wine. 30

Fortune? alas, above the World's low wars
Hope walks and kicks the curl'd heads of conspiring
stars.

Her keel cuts not the waves where these winds stir,
Fortune's whole lottery is one blank to her.

[Her shafts and she fly far above, 35
And forage in the fields of light and love.]

Sweet Hope! kind cheat! fair fallacy! by thee

We are not where nor what we be,
But what and where we would be. Thus art thou
Our absent presence, and our fortune now. 40

Faith's sister! nurse of fair desire!
Fear's antidote! a wise and well staid fire!
Temper 'twixt chill Despair, and torrid Joy!
Queen regent in young Love's minority!

Though the vext chymic vainly chases 45

His fugitive gold through all her faces;

Though Love's more fierce, more fruitless fires
assay

One face more fugitive than all they;

True Hope's a glorious hunter, and her chase

The God of Nature in the fields of grace. 50

FROM STEPS TO THE TEMPLE.

UPON EASTER DAY

I

Rise, Heir of fresh Eternity,
From thy virgin tomb!
Rise, mighty Man of Wonders, and Thy World with
Thee,
Thy tomb the universal East,
Nature's new womb, 5
Thy tomb, fair Immortality's perfumèd nest.

II

Of all the glories make Noon gay,
This is the Morn;
This Rock buds forth the fountain of the streams
of Day:
In Joy's white annals lives this hour 10
When Life was born;
No cloud scowl on His radiant lids, no tempest
lour.

III

Life, by this Light's nativity,
All creatures have;
Death only by this Day's just doom is forced to die, 15
Nor is Death forced; for may he lie
Throned in Thy grave,
Death will on this condition be content to die.

ON A TREATISE OF CHARITY

Rise, then, immortal maid! Religion, rise!
Put on thyself in thine own looks: t' our eyes
Be what thy beauties, not our blots, have made thee,
Such as (ere our dark sins to dust betray'd thee)
Heaven set thee down new-dress'd; when thy bright
birth 5
Shot thee like lightning to th' astonished earth.
From th' dawn of thy fair eyelids wipe away
Dull mists and melancholy clouds: take Day
And thine own beams about thee: bring the best
Of whatso'er perfumed thy Eastern nest. 10
Girt all thy glories to thee: then sit down,
Open this book, fair Queen, and take thy crown.
These learn'd leaves shall vindicate to thee
Thy holiest, humblest handmaid, Charity.
She'll dress thee like thyself, set thee on high 15
Where thou shalt reach all hearts, command each eye.
Lo! where I see thy off'rings wake, and rise
From the pale dust of that strange sacrifice
Which they themselves were; each one putting on
A majesty that may beseem thy throne. 20
The holy youth of Heaven, whose golden rings
Girt round thy awful altars, with bright wings
Fanning thy fair locks (which the World believes
As much as sees) shall with these sacred leaves
Trick their tall plumes, and in that garb shall go 25
If not more glorious, more conspicuous though.
——— Be it enacted then
By the fair laws of thy firm-pointed pen,
God's services no longer shall put on
A sluttishness for pure religion: 30
No longer shall our Churches' frighted stones
Lie scatter'd like the burnt and martyr'd bones
Of dead Devotion; nor faint marbles weep

In their sad ruins; nor Religion keep
A melancholy mansion in those cold 35
Urns. Like God's sanctuaries they look'd of old:
Now seem they Temples consecrate to none,
Or to a new god, Desolation.
No more the hypocrite shall th' upright be
Because he's stiff, and will confess no knee: 40
While others bend their knee, no more shalt thou,
(Disdainful dust and ashes!) bend thy brow;
Nor on God's altar cast two scorching eyes
Baked in hot scorn, for a burnt sacrifice:
But (for a lamb) thy tame and tender heart 45
New struck by Love, still trembling on his dart;
Or (for two turtle-doves) it shall suffice
To bring a pair of meek and humble eyes.
This shall from henceforth be the masculine theme
Pulpits and pens shall sweat in; to redeem 50
Virtue to action, that life-feeding flame
That keeps Religion warm; not swell a name
Of Faith; a mountain-word, made up of air,
With those dear spoils that wont to dress the fair
And fruitful Charity's full breasts (of old), 55
Turning her out to tremble in the cold.
What can the poor hope from us, when we be
Uncharitable even to Charity?
Nor shall our zealous ones still have a fling
At that most horrible and hornèd thing, 60
Forsooth the Pope: by which black name they call
The Turk, the devil, Furies, Hell and all,
And something more. O he is anti-Christ:
Doubt this, and doubt (say they) that Christ is
Christ:
Why, 'tis a point of Faith. Whate'er it be, 65
I'm sure it is no point of Charity.
In sum, no longer shall our people hope,
To be a true Protestant's but to hate the Pope.

FROM POSTHUMOUS POEMS.

LUKE 2. QUAERIT JESUM SUUM MARIA, ETC.

And is he gone whom these arms held but now?

 Their hope, their vow?

Did ever grief and joy in one poor heart

 So soon change part?

He's gone; the fair'st flower that e'er bosom dress'd, 5

 My soul's sweet rest.

My womb's chaste pride is gone, my heaven-born

 boy:

 And where is joy?

He's gone; and his loved steps to wait upon,

 My joy is gone. 10

My joys and he are gone, my grief and I

 Alone must lie.

He's gone; not leaving with me, till he come,

 One smile at home.

Oh, come then, bring Thy mother her lost joy: 15

 Oh come, sweet boy.

Make haste and come, or e'er my grief and I

 Make haste and die.

Peace, heart! the heavens are angry, all their spheres

 Rival thy tears. 20

I was mistaken, some fair sphere or other
Was thy blest mother.
What but the fairest heaven could own the birth
Of so fair earth?
Yet sure thou did'st lodge here; this womb of mine 25
Was once call'd thine.
Oft have these arms thy cradle envièd,
Beguiled thy bed.
Oft to thy easy ears hath this shrill tongue
Trembled and sung. 30
Oft have I wrapt thy slumbers in soft airs,
And strok'd thy cares.
Oft hath this hand those silken casements kept,
While their suns slept.
Oft have my hungry kisses made thine eyes 35
Too early rise.
Oft have I spoil'd my kisses' daintiest diet,
To spare thy quiet.
Oft from this breast to thine my love-tossed heart
Hath leapt, to part. 40
Oft my lost soul have I been glad to seek
On thy soft cheek.
Oft have these arms, alas, show'd to these eyes
Their now lost joys.
Dawn then to me, thou morn of mine own day, 45
And let heaven stay.
Oh, would'st thou here still fix thy fair abode,
My bosom God:
What hinders but my bosom still might be
Thy heaven to Thee? 50

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